

# THRIVE



AN EDUCATIONAL AND INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE  
FOR TODAY'S AIR & SPACE FORCE SPOUSE



*Military spouses comprise less than 1% of the population. They stand beside our nation's heroes, deeply rooted in a marriage that is tested and tried, for better or for worse. They are strong and resilient, often the one left at home to do it all. They are the backbone of the military family. They thrive because they have grit, resilience, and heart.*

*We dedicate this guide to them.*

*We would like to acknowledge that "spouse" is not an all inclusive term for all of those who possess the essence of a military spouse and support a servicemember. We do not want to exclude anyone who feels that this word does not represent them. However, many of the official resources in this guide are only available to DoD ID holders.*

Created by: Air & Space Force Spouses  
Current as of 1 December 2021, Version 2

Note: While the Thrive Team strived to make the information in this guide as timely and accurate as possible through coordination with Department of the Air Force personnel and programs, we make no claim, promise, or guarantee about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this guide, and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of the guide. No warranty of any kind, implied, expressed, or statutory, including but not limited to the warranties of non-infringement of third party rights, title, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose or freedom from computer virus, is given with respect to the contents of this guide or its links to other Internet resources. References or the appearance of hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement of non-federal entities or imply Department of Defense or Department of the Air Force endorsement of any company or organization.

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Welcome to the Department of the Air Force Family!

You, the military spouse, are the heart of our Air and Space Forces. You are essential to the success and strength of our military and this nation. Yours is a life of service too and we are amazed at what you accomplish each day, supporting not only your immediate family, but those around you who also serve.

We hope this guide helps answer your questions and connects you with the people, information, and resources to assist you and your family with successfully navigating our military way of life. It was created “For Spouses, By Spouses” with YOU in mind.

The Department of the Air Force is one big family that includes Active Duty, Guard, Reserve and Civilians. It takes all of us, including our military spouses, to execute the Air and Space Force missions. We thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your support to not only our country, but also your Department of the Air Force family!

*Sharene Brown*  
Sharene Brown

*Mollie Raymond*  
Mollie Raymond



Our goal with this guidebook is common in the hearts of many military spouse efforts: to support oneself through the service of others. As we have navigated our own military spouse careers, we have learned skills and lessons that made the challenges easier and increased our quality of life and personal success. We wrote this guide to share our wisdom and experience with you. This resource is written for military families, by military families. We wrote it as a tool that can follow you through your military spouse career and point you in the right direction when you need assistance. Above all, we hope it encourages and inspires you to keep moving forward, to embrace this beautiful life, and *THRIVE!*

Whether you have been a military spouse for a moment or a lifetime, we see you. We see the sacrifices that you make. We see the support that you provide. We see the value that you add. We see you because we are military spouses too. Individual military spouses are beautifully diverse in their talents, traits, and cultures. The shared essence of a military spouse is born out of the skills learned while navigating military spouse life: *grit, resilience, and heart.*

This guide is designed to teach you how to build a network that will strengthen you with a foundation of support. We hope that the “In This Together” section feels like a friend walking you through the basics. The guide then shifts to “**Five&Thrive**”. Here you will find resources to help you navigate five key quality-of-life areas that affect military families: **childcare, education, healthcare, housing and spouse employment**. While you might not need help with childcare or employment today, there is a likely chance that you will in the future or you might know a fellow spouse who does. Keep this guide as a handy resource when the need arises. Lastly, the “Military Life” section will teach you about the culture that you live in. It will demonstrate both specific resources that you will need and helpful advice that will empower you to navigate this culture more gracefully.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, we want to thank YOU! Thank you for the support that you lend to our nation and its citizens. Thank you for your daily courage and strength. Thank you for the talents and skills that you unselfishly bring to the table. The Air and Space Force could not do it without you!

In this together,

*Your Thrive Team*



# IN THIS TOGETHER

In this section, you will learn how to build a support network. Beginning with spouse support resources, followed by learning how to build your support system, how to connect within your unit, and how to prioritize your own resilience. These skills and resources will aid you as you navigate military spouse life.

# SPOUSE SUPPORT

## **AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTER (A&FRC)**

The Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) serves as a one-stop information and referral center for Air Force, Space Force, Guard, Reserve, and retiree members and their families as well as DoD civilians and surviving family members. The major function of the A&FRC is ensuring personnel and their families are provided comprehensive work/life consultations, workshops, seminars, and information that builds readiness, resilience, and well-being. The A&FRC has many programs, to include a Volunteer program where they can connect individuals to on/off base opportunities to support community. A list of programs and offerings is listed below.

- Hub of Information and Referral
- Access to Military and Family Life Counselors
- Personal and Family Readiness
- Personal and Work Life Education
- Air Force Families Forever (Long-term survivor support)
- Federal Voting Assistance
- Deployment Support (Pre to Post)
- Personal Financial Readiness
- Air Force Aid Society Assists
- Transition Assistance
- Relocation Assistance
- Employment Assistance
- Exceptional Family Member - Family Support
- Crisis Support and Disaster Response
- Casualty Assistance and Survivor Benefits Plan Counsel
- Spouse Orientation/Assistance
- Volunteer Resources
- Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2)
- Childcare for Volunteering
- Bundles for Babies
- Heart Link

## **AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY (AFAS)**

Air Force Aid Society is an official charity of the US Air Force and US Space Force. AFAS supports Airmen, Guardians, and their families through emergency assistance, education support, and community programs.

## **HEART LINK**

The purpose of the Heart Link Program is to strengthen military families and enhance mission readiness. Appreciating that spouses play an important role in reenlistment decisions, therefore impacting retention, the overall program goal is to ensure that spouses are aware of their importance to the Air & Space Force, and feel as though they are a part of the team. A&FRC teams administer and oversee the program, which includes orientation activities consisting of presentations, interactive games and exercises.

I have been an active volunteer in my base spouse club and key spouse program. What started as a way to make friends in a new area transformed into invaluable friendships, personal growth with public speeches, finding new talents I never imagined, and a sense of fulfillment giving back to my community. As a new SAH parent, I found getting involved with base organizations really filled my days, gave me all the friends with kids I never knew I needed, and filled my heart with joy.

- Alley K, Space Force Spouse, Schriever SFB



## **KEY SPOUSE PROGRAM**

The U.S. Air Force Key Spouse Program (KSP) is an official Air Force Unit Family Readiness Program designed to enhance readiness, personal/family resilience and establish a sense of community. Key spouses (KS) serve as a vital resource to command teams in an effort to support Air & Space Force families. The strategic vision is to increase resilience and unit cohesion amongst military members and their families throughout the military life cycle. The KS is typically a spouse volunteer in the unit who is appointed by the commander and serves as a communication link between the chain of command (commander and first sergeant) and unit spouses/families. The KS provides timely information and referral services to families serving as a lifeline to family readiness. Depending on the size of the unit, more than one KS may be appointed. The A&FRC provides initial and recurring training to the KS volunteers and acts as a collaborative unit resource. Key spouses can serve anyone supporting the unit including civilians, their families, and non married partners. Ongoing communication between the KS and families of deployed members allow their families to remain connected with their unit and community to reduce stress and the sense of isolation. Thanks to this connectivity, deployed families report fewer personal problems and issues during separation. For more information, contact your KS, first sergeant or the A&FRC.

## **BLUE STAR FAMILIES**

Blue Star Families was founded by military spouses in 2009 to empower military families to thrive as they serve. They are committed to strengthening military families by connecting them with their neighbors – individuals and organizations – to create vibrant communities of mutual support.

## **MILITARY ONESOURCE**

Military OneSource, both a call center and a website, provides **free**, comprehensive information, referrals, and assistance on every aspect of military life 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to all component members of the Armed Forces, their family members, and survivors. Military OneSource can help you find information and resources for but not limited to:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Non-medical Counseling                     | • Legal Resources                        |
| • New-to-the-Military Benefits and Resources | • Tax Services                           |
| • Deployment                                 | • Spouse Education & Employment          |
| • Separation and Transition                  | • Health Care/ Mental Health             |
| • Veteran Benefits and Resources             | • Digital Library including Ancestry.com |
| • Spouse Benefits and Resources              | • Foreign Language Lessons               |
| • Parenting and Child Resources              | • Translation Services                   |
| • Special Needs                              | • Free Caregiver Database                |
| • Gold Star and Surviving Family Members     | • Recreation                             |
| • PCSing                                     | • Music Lessons                          |
| • Housing                                    | • Travel                                 |
| • Personal Finances                          | • And Many More Resources                |

Ask for help, your mil spouse neighbors and friends may seem as busy and overwhelmed as you, but there is no other community that will come to the rescue at any hour, no matter the circumstances, like the mil spouse community - you are in great company. - Jen A., Air Force Spouse, Retired

## **MILITARY SPOUSE ADVOCACY NETWORK**

Military Spouse Advocacy Network (MSAN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to create stronger military families through education, empowerment, and support. The military mentorship-HUB helps to bridge military families from every branch of the armed forces and their surrounding communities in locations around the world through a virtual education and resource center, new military spouse support program, and leadership development program. MSAN's collaborations with official military installations, Department of Defense (DoD) resources, and trusted partner organizations provide a structured and personal approach through a one-of-a-kind peer-to-peer mentorship experience, building long-term connections to local and national resources expanding the military family sense of community.

## **SPOUSE CLUBS**

Spouses Clubs can be found on almost every installation and can be a great first stop to get plugged into your new community. Many spouses clubs are a non-profit operating on military installations that strive to give back to the military community. They often help run the Thrift Shop, annual fundraisers, and apply for grants to help fund education scholarships for dependents and other charitable giving. The spouses club offers a built-in volunteer opportunity that can be invaluable to getting you into the community, meeting new friends, and giving back. Your membership dues give you access to members only events and special mini clubs (for example, book club, movie club, recipe club, hiking club, and so many more) and a place to connect with spouses just like you.



## **USAF CONNECT**

AF Connect has everything you need to stay in touch and up to date with the USAF. Features include Notifications, News, Directory, Facebook, Twitter, and more.

**BE KIND  
TO YOURSELF  
& BUILD A GOOD  
SUPPORT  
SYSTEM**

# BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

One of the most important steps you can take as a military spouse is building your support system. Your travels may take you around the world and have you connecting with some amazing people who will support you in your journey. While it might happen naturally over time, we recommend being proactive when it comes to establishing your support system.

Build your support system in tiers: locally, in your community and squadron, around the installation, and nationally or globally. It always helps to have a quick reference to a community that can physically or virtually support you so you can reach out to a resource when you need it. These are just a few examples of how you can build your support system:

## NATIONAL

**Includes:** Military OneSource, Blue Star Families, National Resource Directory, Red Cross

**Offers:** Emotional support, Information and Resources, Mentorship, Counseling Services, Financial Services, PCS Support

**Examples:** *Military Spouse Advocacy Network can give you a personal mentor to help guide you through various challenges.*

## INSTALLATION

**Includes:** Community Support Coordinator, Airman & Family Readiness Center, School Liaison Office, Spouses Club, Chapel Programs

**Offers:** Family Information and Resources, Logistical Support, TDY Support, Deployment Support, TAP/Transition Support, PCS Support, Financial Support, Counseling

**Examples:** *Heart Link Program can teach you what resources are available on your installation and how to use them.*

## SQUADRON

**Includes:** Key Spouses, First Sergeants, Spouse Social Groups

**Offers:** Information and Resources, Emotional Support, Logistical Support, Friends

**Examples:** *Key spouses and social groups can help you make friends and find support.*

## COMMUNITY

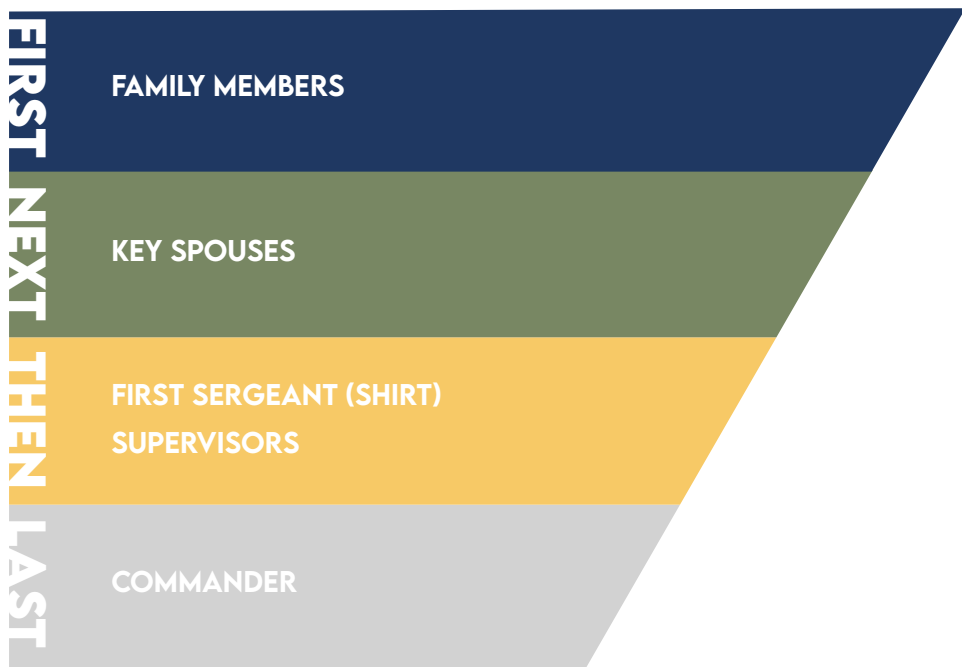
**Includes:** Neighbors, People in the Local Community, Books, Blogs, Podcasts

**Offers:** Shared Experiences of Others, Emotional Support, Logistical Support, Friendships

**Examples:** *Social media can help you crowd source resources at a new assignment.*

# HOW TO CONNECT OPERATIONALLY

There are many reasons why you might need to communicate with someone in your Airman or Guardian's unit. It can be intimidating, but it is acceptable to reach out, especially if you know the right channels to use.



If you do not have access to the contact information of anyone listed above, do not hesitate to ask for it. Some reasons you might reach out to those you would find on your recall roster are as follows: medical issues, base housing issues, school issues, on-base services, deployment information, childcare, etc.

My husband used to hand me a recall roster when we got to a new squadron "just in case". Just in case of what? I couldn't understand half of the words on the paper and I had no idea who I would call or why. I'd put it in a stack of papers, never to be seen again. Turns out, my husband was right. I just didn't understand how to use it.

-Anonymous Air Force Spouse

## FAMILY

Fellow military families can be a huge support to you. They will understand your challenges because they have lived them personally. Reach out and seek connections within your unit and on your installation. We are all in this together.

## KEY SPOUSE

The most approachable channel for you is your key spouse. Hopefully, upon arrival to your new duty station, your key spouse reached out and introduced themselves to you. Your key spouse is trained to know about available resources and is always there for you if you need support. Your key spouse can offer:

**Practical help:** *What are my schooling options? What hospital can I go to? My family is quarantined and we need groceries!*

**Emotional support:** *I'm lonely and need help finding friends. Does my Airman/Guardian really not get their schedule more than 24 hours in advance?*

**Advocate on your behalf to the unit's leadership:** *Our family is faltering under this ops tempo. We cannot find adequate childcare or housing.*

## FIRST SERGEANT

If your unit does not have a key spouse, the unit's first sergeant is always available to help enlisted, officer and civilian families alike. First sergeants, or "Shirts" as they are commonly referred to, are responsible for the health, morale, and welfare of all the enlisted members in a squadron and are the chief adviser to the commander concerning the enlisted force. While caring for families is not the primary duty of the first sergeant, they often do so knowing that it affects the resilience and readiness of their unit. Shirts are well-versed in available resources and can connect you to the right one for your needs.

## SUPERVISOR

Your member has a direct supervisor that they can and should go to for their needs. This can include work or personal issues. You should know who their supervisor is. However, if you feel a need to reach out to them, we recommend going through your member.

## COMMANDER

The unit's commander is in charge of everyone and everything in the unit. They are in charge of the overall wellness of the people and accomplishing the mission. If you feel you have information or an issue that you would like the commander to be aware of, follow the chain of command and go through your servicemember, your key spouse or your first sergeant.

If you're not getting the results you need, especially regarding base services, medical care, childcare or schooling issues, there is always someone higher in the chain of command that can help. Don't suffer or stew over it - elevate it. But always use the chain of command if possible.

-Anonymous Space Force Spouse

# RESILIENCE RESOURCES

According to the American Psychological Association, resilience is the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress. Few careers challenge that ability more than military life – not just for those who wear a uniform but also for their family members and civilians who work alongside them.

The following are programs and resources to help you learn about your own resilience and to advocate for those around you. To receive any form of resilience training please contact your A&FRC or Military & Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) or Community Support Coordinator (CSC) at your local installation.

**Note:** At joint bases, A&FRC is referred to as M&FRC.

## **WWW.RESILIENCE.AF.MIL**

This website is dedicated to helping our Airmen and Guardians and their families thrive by enhancing personal well-being, optimizing human performance, and promoting a culture of dignity and respect for all.

Check out their [Prevention Tools List](#).

## **FAMILY SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING**

This educational program uses a fictional story to help viewers recognize warning signs of distress. It also provides training to help viewers understand different options for intervening, along with available resources, and helps viewers appreciate the importance of being proactive and developing strong protective factors.

## **KEY SPOUSE PROGRAM**

Your Key Spouse Program can be a tremendous resilience resource for you. To learn more information on how, please refer back to page 9.

## **THE AIR FORCE SPOUSE RESILIENCE SKILLS TOOLKIT**

You play a key role in the well-being of our military families. The purpose of the nine modules in this training is to enhance your ability to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands in your life. Each resilience skills module provides opportunities to watch, read, listen, and interact with content, including a printable Digital Kneeboard, used to supplement facilitator-led modules.

COVID impacted all of us in different ways. In the early months of uncertainty and social distancing, several military spouses at our installation tried to find creative ways to connect. One impactful way was through book clubs using Dr. Kendra's Lowe's material found in MilSpouse Strength, "Changing the Way You See and Respond to Military Life Stress." Not only did this resource help us in the moment, but it has helped many military spouses navigate what can often be a stressful way of life. There is no doubt it made a difference in my life and will for years to come!

- Leslie J., Air Force Spouse, The Pentagon

## **RESILIENCE TRAINING ASSISTANT (RTA)**

Spouse RTAs deliver small group training for spouses and families along with facilitated discussion and an activity (or multiple activities) for each skill they are focused on. Spouses do not have to be Key Spouses in order to become an RTA.

**Requirements:** Spouses must complete the RTA training course facilitated by an Master Resilience Trainer or Community Support Coordinator.

## **MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER (MRT)**

An MRT teaches resilience skills to enhance performance and increase resilience, both individually and collectively. The goal of the program is to teach about resilience and to train those individuals to teach other families about resilience as well, using positive psychology.

Skills learned include goal setting, energy management, emotion awareness and regulation, balancing thoughts, gaining perspective, effective communication, challenging negative beliefs, practicing gratitude, identifying personal strengths and self-care.

**Requirements:** Key Spouse, RTA

## **BOUNCE**

The BOUNCE curriculum provides a standardized method for teaching Air & Space Force teens and tweens resilience skills. The curriculum is based on the DAF resilience training program, but is adapted to meet the unique needs of a youth population. The curriculum consists of 12 modules that each address a resilience skill, including description and instruction on how to use the skill, why it is important, and activities to practice the skill.

**Note:** Contact your local A&FRC or M&FRC for more information on RTA, MRT and Bounce.

## **360° LEADERS COURSE**

The 360° Leaders Course, offered in some locations, is one of the most powerful and effective leadership, health, wellness, resilience, and fitness initiatives in the Department of Defense. The course provides military leaders and their spouses with solid, holistic, evidence based tools for self-assessment and self-care in a dynamic, 'learn through doing' environment. 360° topics include stress, stress management, yoga, mindfulness, humor and health, spirituality, physical fitness and physical training planning, injury prevention, pain management, couples and parent-child communication, sex and relationships, sexual assault and domestic violence, nutrition, journaling, sleep, financial management and planning, suicide and suicide prevention, psychological fitness, resilience, and transitions.

## **FOCUS PROJECT: RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES**

FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) provides resilience training to military children, families, and couples. It teaches practical skills to help families and couples overcome common challenges related to a military life. It helps build on current strengths and teach new strategies to enhance communication and problem solving, goal setting and creating a shared family story.

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# FIVE & THRIVE

Five&Thrive is an initiative that focuses on the top five quality-of-life challenges our military families face: Childcare, Education, Healthcare, Housing, and Spouse Employment. Here you can find resources to support your family in these areas.

# FIVE & THRIVE



## CHILDCARE

### **CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (CDC)**

Department of the Air Force (DAF) CDCs are designed to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for children and are uniquely designed to accommodate each child's developmental level. DAF CDCs offer the following services: Full Day/Weekly Childcare, Hourly Care, Part-Day Enrichment (PDE) Program, and Give Parents A Break (GPAB).

### **FAMILY CHILD CARE (FCC)**

FCC offers childcare to children and youth from 2 weeks to 12 years of age. Care is provided in homes located on or off an installation that has been certified by the Mission Support Group Commander. One of the hallmarks of the FCC is its ability to tailor the types of care offered to fit virtually every schedule and special need. DAF FCC offers the following childcare services: Full Day/Weekly Childcare, Hourly Care, and Expanded Childcare.

### **CHILD CARE AWARE® OF AMERICA (CCAoA)**

CCAoA works with a national network of more than 400 childcare resource and referral agencies and other partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable childcare. CCAoA leads projects that increase the quality and availability of childcare, conducts research, and advocates for childcare policies that positively impact the lives of children and families. CCAoA also provides childcare assistance for military families through fee assistance.

### **SCHOOL AGE CARE (SAC)**

SAC offers childcare (Before and After School Care and Full Day Care) for children and youth from 5 to 12 years of age. SAC is located in a separate facility or in a separate space in the Youth Program facility. It promotes the cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, language, and physical development of children through programs and services that recognize differences in children and youth and encourages self-confidence, curiosity, creativity, self-discipline, and resilience.

### **MILITARY ONESOURCE**

Through Military OneSource, military families now have free access to a national database of more than a million caregivers so they can find hourly, flexible and on-demand childcare. The nationally recognized subscription service lets you search based on your own needs and criteria, find potential care providers, check references, and review background checks.

## **MILITARY CHILD CARE**

MilitaryChildCare.com (MCC) is a Department of Defense (DoD) website for military and DoD-affiliated families seeking childcare. This single online gateway provides access to comprehensive information on military-operated and military-subsidized childcare options worldwide. With MCC, families can search for and request care, manage their requests, and update their household profile - online any time and from anywhere - making it easier for families to find the childcare they need.

## **YOUTH PROGRAMS (YP)**

DAF Youth Programs (YP) offer opportunities for positive youth development by supporting the skills, interests, qualities, and abilities of all youth. The DAF operates YPs on 72 DAF-led installations and provides opportunities for geographically separate youth. YP offerings include: youth sports and fitness, programs for positive youth development, partnerships, teen programs, STEM initiatives, residential youth camps, and youth sponsorships.



## **DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS (CYP)**

CYP assists military and civilian personnel in balancing the competing demands of the mission and family life by catering programs and services for eligible children and youth from birth through 18 years of age.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. People aren't always going to know exactly what you need, but more often than not, they so badly want to help. My family went through a challenging humanitarian assignment which consisted of getting 3 children settled on top of a billion medical appointments. If we hadn't reached out to our military family, I'm not sure how we would have done it all - especially during a global pandemic.

- Laura C., Air Force Spouse, USAF Academy

# EDUCATION

## MIL SPOUSE EDUCATION

Today's military spouses can take advantage of several educational benefits and opportunities which were once only available to servicemembers. Recognizing the importance of education and training for enhancing the employability of military spouses, the various services offer a variety of educational benefits to spouses. However, as you will quickly discover, there is no one-stop center for spousal education. You will have to take initiative in uncovering the many benefits and opportunities for which you qualify. For more information on opportunities, begin with your A&FRC or Education Office.

### **My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Scholarship Program**

The MyCAA provides military spouses the opportunity and financing to receive the training and education needed for careers that will persist during the military lifestyle of multiple relocations. The Department of Defense has funded a maximum benefit of \$4,000 with a fiscal cap of \$2,000 to eligible military spouses to use toward associate degree programs, licenses, certifications, continuing education credits or credentials leading to employment (not higher degrees). The spouse must finish the program of study within three years from start date of first course. For further information, contact MilitaryOneSource at 1-800-342-9647 or visit your base A&FRC.

#### ***Eligibility:***

- Spouses of active duty members: E1-E5, W1-W2 and O1-O2.
- Spouses of activated Guard and Reserve with the same ranks are also eligible (must be able to start and complete while sponsor is on Title 10 orders).

### **Education Office**

The Education Office provides educational counseling, information about stateside colleges and universities all over the world, and assistance with financial aid and scholarship information. Family members are welcome to participate, but active-duty military have priority to class spaces. Tuition assistance is provided for more than 350 institutions worldwide. Information on Veteran's Administration education benefits and federal grants or loans is available through AFVEC or may be reviewed with a counselor in one of the education centers.

### **Post-9/11 GI Bill**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill helps you pay for school or job training. If you've served on active duty after September 10, 2001, you may qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Qualified servicemembers can transfer all 36 months or a portion of your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a spouse or child.

### **MilSpouse Money Mission®**

MilSpouse Money Mission® is a financial education website made for military spouses to empower them in leading their families to stronger financial futures.

## **K-12 EDUCATION**

### **School Liaison Office (SLO)**

School Liaisons are located at each installation and are the central point of contact for commanders, military families, and local school systems on education-related matters for grades Pre-K-12. They partner with local, state- level educators, and other policymakers, to positively impact the quality of education for military connected children. The School Liaison Office (SLO) advocates, advises, and builds alliances to help address education concerns, challenges or issues of the Total Force and offers a network to educate and provide information or referral for both military families and school districts. Services provided but are not limited to: Transition Support (School Districts & Boundaries), Alternative Schooling Options/Support (Private, Parochial, Charter and Homeschool), Deployment Support, College, Career & Military Readiness, Scholarship & Grant Resources, Parent Workshops, School District Professional Development and Military Interstate Compact Compliance Support. School Liaisons build, sustain and are the continuity in education - community partnerships.



### **Special Education Legal Assistance**

Families facing obstacles in their children's special education experience should visit the local Judge Advocate office for assistance. Attorneys can assist families with special education assessments, Individual Education Plan (IEP) eligibility/ advice/counsel, understanding parent's rights, as well as litigation support and dispute remedies or help connect them with other resources. Families can find contact information for their local Judge Advocate legal assistance office or contact the EFMP Central Cell at 1-800-565-0102, option 7.

### **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)**

The Military Child Education Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that solely exists to help the military child thrive in the face of transition and separation. MCEC is dedicated to ensuring inclusive, quality educational experiences for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. MCEC is a professional coalition with a diverse community consisting of public school districts, private schools, colleges and universities, small businesses and corporations, nonprofit organizations, military commands and installations, military families, and caring individuals from local communities across our nation.

### **Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)**

The Council of State Governments (CSG), in cooperation with the US Department of Defense, drafted an Interstate Compact to address some of the educational challenges transitioning children of military families face. While the Compact is not exhaustive in its coverage, it does address the key issues encountered by military families: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation. Children of active duty members of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders, commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year are eligible for assistance under the Compact. For more information, see <https://mic3.net/>

# HEALTHCARE

## TRICARE

Active duty servicemembers and their dependents (spouses, parents, and children registered in DEERS) are eligible for TRICARE.

If you are registered in DEERS and have a valid military ID card, you are covered by one of the TRICARE (health care) programs. There are several TRICARE programs to choose from depending on your status and location.



**Active duty servicemembers** must enroll in one of the following TRICARE Prime plans based on their duty station. *Active duty members pay no enrollment fees for TRICARE Prime.*

**TRICARE Prime** is a managed care option available worldwide. TRICARE Prime offers fewer out-of-pocket costs than TRICARE Select, but less freedom of choice for providers.

**TRICARE Prime Remote** provides healthcare coverage through civilian providers for active duty members, activated Guard and Reserve members, retirees, and families on remote assignment. You must live AND work more than 50 miles or approximately one hour's drive time from the nearest Military Treatment Facility. TRICARE Prime Remote is offered in the 50 United States only.

**TRICARE Prime Overseas** is similar to the TRICARE Prime program offered stateside, including cost-shares and deductibles. The program serves active duty members, activated Reserve and Guard members, and their command-sponsored dependents.

**TRICARE Prime Remote Overseas** is offered in designated remote overseas locations for active duty servicemembers and their families. The program is similar to TRICARE Prime Overseas but you will receive most, if not all of your care from foreign providers.

My husband and I spent five years, over three duty stations, trying to have our first child. We were stationed at Scott AFB when we had our fifth miscarriage and started working with a specialist 4.5 hours away in Chicago. When we came up on the VML, my husband worked with his leadership and they found a way for us to stay at Scott. They cross flowed him into a new airframe. At great expense to the Air Force, he was only in the KC-135 for nine months. But for our family, it was enough time for our specialist to find our issue and give us a viable pregnancy. We are forever grateful to our leadership for finding a way to prioritize our family's needs.

- Anne P., Air Force Spouse, Vance AFB

Being an EFMP family for the past 20 years has presented a mix of challenges for my family on a variety of levels. Without the support of my fellow military spouses, I would have never channeled through it all. What made the hard times in my journey easier was the incredibly supportive friends that always had my back. Military spouses go through a lot of adjustments and it doesn't necessarily get easier the more you do it.

- Jenn B., Air Force Spouse, JBSA Lackland

**Active duty dependents** can enroll in one of the Prime plans listed above, or they may qualify to use one of the following plans.

**TRICARE Select** provides the most flexibility to eligible beneficiaries. It is a fee-for-service option that lets you see any authorized provider.

**TRICARE Young Adult** is an option for unmarried, adult children between the ages of 21 and 26 years old depending on higher education status.

**The U.S. Family Health Plan** is available to eligible persons who live near selected civilian medical facilities on the East, West, and Gulf coasts.

### **Dental Benefits**

TRICARE Active Duty Dental Program is available for either active duty members who are referred for care by a military dental treatment facility to the civilian dental community or have a duty location and residence more than 50 miles from a military dental treatment facility.

TRICARE Dental Plan is a voluntary dental insurance program. The dental benefit is available to eligible active duty family members, eligible National Guard and Reserve members, and their family members.

### **Pharmacy Benefits**

TRICARE Pharmacy Program provides the prescription drugs you need, when you need them, in a safe, easy, and cost-effective manner.

### **Vision Benefits**

TRICARE offers limited vision benefits depending on your beneficiary status and what type of coverage you have. Medically necessary vision benefits are available under all TRICARE plans. Most dependents and retirees are also eligible for vision insurance through the FEDVIP program.

**TRICARE East**  
Humana Military  
800-444-5445  
[www.TRICARE.mil](http://www.TRICARE.mil)

**TRICARE West**  
Health Net  
844-866-9378

I was diagnosed with breast cancer and when my hair started falling out during chemotherapy I decided to shave my head, not only did my husband shave his head, but every single Chief on the base joined him in a show of support for me. I have never felt so much love during such a difficult time.

- Terri L., Air Force Spouse, Langley AFB

## PATIENT ADVOCATE

Located at the Medical Treatment Facility, The Patient Advocate handles concerns and complaints from military families about their care or about the medical staff.

## EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM (EFMP)

The EFMP provides comprehensive support to family members with special needs. EFMP takes an all-inclusive approach to coordinate military and civilian community, educational, medical, housing, and personnel services to help Airmen, Guardians, and their families with special needs. An Exceptional Family Member is a family member with any physical, emotional, developmental, or intellectual special need that requires special treatment, therapy, education, training, or counseling, and meets the eligibility criteria.

Airmen and Guardians with Exceptional Family Members are required to register for EFMP and keep enrollment information current. This way, family needs can be considered during the assignments process and ensure families are assigned to areas where they can access necessary resources.

**As of August 2021** families can receive 24/7 support when they find themselves in need of immediate assistance. Total Force servicemembers and the EFMP families can contact the **Total Force Service Center (TFSC)** to connect with a representative who will help answer EFMP questions and can also elevate issues to an EFMP Central Cell staff member when necessary. Call 800-525-0102.

For more information on EFMP, please visit the following:

[Department of the Air Force Facebook Page](#)

[Air Force Personnel Center EFMP](#)

[MilitaryOneSource EFMP & Me](#)

[Department of the Air Force Family Vector](#) or follow the QR code to access the DAF Family Vector site to access all of the resources above.



## MENTAL HEALTH

### Military and Family Life Counseling Program

Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC) are licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, social workers, or psychologists who provide confidential, non-medical and short-term counseling support to service personnel and their dependents. They support a range of issues including relationships, crisis intervention, stress management, grief, academic challenges, occupational and other individual and family issues.

### Veterans/Military Crisis Line (VCL/MCL)

The purpose of the Veterans/Military Crisis Line is to connect servicemembers, their families, and their friends to a qualified Department of Defense responder in a time of crisis. The VCL/MCL can be reached by phone at 1-800-273-8255, by text at 838255, or via online chat at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

My husband was a new recruiter outside of base and I gave birth within our first few months there. I didn't know the other spouses well but the flight chief's wife showed up in every way. Our personalities didn't match well and we didn't have anything to talk about but when I had PPD she made sure she was there anyways. She held my daughter and we sat quietly for hours. She didn't ask how to help, she jumped in and helped like family would. We've returned the favor and grown and added to our spouse family. We're all in on this together, that's the Air Force I know.

- Taylor S., Air Force Spouse, Wright-Patterson AFB



## **Mental Health Clinic**

The Mental Health Clinic is part of the base Medical Group and provides a wide variety of prevention and treatment services, including drug and alcohol abuse assessment and treatment. All Mental Health Clinics see active duty servicemembers, and some clinics also have the capacity to provide services to dependents. To find out if your local installation Mental Health Clinic sees dependents, simply contact them by phone.

## **Chaplains**

Chaplains are available 24/7 for both in-person and telephone counseling sessions. They counsel on a wide range of issues to include stress, relationships, life transitions, suicide, sexual assault, grief and many others. Information shared with a chaplain is treated with absolute confidentiality, offering privileged communication of personal matters without chain of command notification. They serve all military members and their dependents, DoD civilians, contractors and retirees, regardless of religious preference or with no religion at all.

## **Family Advocacy Program (FAP)**

The FAP works to promote healthy relationship education, domestic (child and/or adult) and intimate partner violence prevention and intervention. Interventions can include individual and couples therapy, anger management, stress management, and other similar types of services. They serve all active duty military members and their dependents.

## **Military OneSource**

Military OneSource is your 24/7 gateway to trusted information, resources and confidential help. They offer non-medical counseling, financial counseling on the following stressors and more: relationships, family, money, PCS, major changes and personal goals.

## **TRICARE**

Dependents can be seen off base, simply by contacting TRICARE. TRICARE will automatically authorize a specified number of sessions with a network provider. TRICARE can provide you with a list of network providers.

## **Cohen Veterans Network**

We offer brief, client-centered therapy for a variety of mental health issues including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, adjustment issues, anger, grief and loss, family issues, transition challenges, relationship problems, and children's behavioral problems.

# HOUSING

Your first contact should be the military housing office (MHO) at the new installation to learn of the housing options available to you at the time of your move.

## PRIVATIZED HOUSING (BASE HOUSING)

Generally there are two types of housing on-base, government-owned or privatized housing. Privatized housing is available at CONUS, Alaska and Hawaii installations. This housing is owned, managed and maintained by a private entity known as the Privatized Housing (PH) Project Owner. Government-owned housing is available at the majority of overseas locations with a few homes at Wright Patterson, OH. The installation MHO manages government housing and places you on the appropriate waiting list, and provides information on availability and wait times. This same office also processes your initial application for privatized housing and provides you a referral to the PH management office which will work with you directly to lease PH. As with most housing communities, residents have responsibilities when living in government-owned or privatized housing. The MHO or PH management office will provide you a resident brochure that outlines these when you sign a lease or move into housing. This information will include all the details you'll need to know about living in housing such as who to call for maintenance, where you park, what days refuse is picked up, when you can water your lawn, pets specifics and even how to prepare for future termination. When you leave the installation, you will have to be sure that your housing passes a cleaning inspection. The standards for cleaning may vary somewhat from installation-to-installation, but generally you will be expected to do a very thorough cleaning job, including floors (wood, tiled, and carpeted), walls, and appliances. And of course, if there is any damages to the housing unit you will be expected to pay for repairs.

Here are some advantages to consider about Privatized Housing:

**Privatized Housing benefits:** more square footage than traditional military construction; quality construction; modern appliances, cabinetry and fixtures; lawn maintenance in some communities; garages and carports in most homes; convenient access to work and services

**Community benefits:** playgrounds; community centers; swimming pools; basketball/ tennis/ volleyball courts; varied neighborhood activities

**Cost benefits:** BAH covers all rent; utility allowance is included in some locations

*\*Ensure you have renter's insurance if it's not included at your location.*

## OFF-BASE HOUSING

MHOs also maintain information regarding rental property including apartments, townhouses and single family homes. They may also maintain local information regarding sales in their office. Go to [HOMES.MIL](https://www.homes.mil) to locate available properties for rent, including short term leases and permanent housing. In CONUS, it is not required to have your lease or rental agreement reviewed by the MHO or Legal Office but both are available if desired. In overseas locations, MHOs must review your lease.

We felt the most support in base housing- our neighbors understood. When we didn't have salt from the move I asked the neighbor and didn't feel uncomfortable about it. We have lived on base for three assignments and off

I feel the most support I've had from my Air Force community was in Europe. The sense of support there is different than in the states. There the AF community really rallies around you and you become a part of it. The connections you have at overseas bases with your unit or squadron is nothing short of family. Don't Lose yourself. You will move and things will change but you will always be you. Share you with the world.

- Katy H., AF Spouse, Little Rock AFB

There are several housing resources you can use to obtain general housing information, including the [AF Housing website](#), [HEAT \(Housing Early Application Tool\)](#) or direct communication with the Installation MHO.

## SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Sponsors are trained servicemembers who help newcomers settle into a new duty station. They are available to all military families, no matter where you are moving. Sponsors offer a friendly face to greet you and your family at your new location, and provide personal experience and recommendations to help you feel at home. Typically of a similar rank and family status, a sponsor can assist with everything from finding the right housing options, to showing you around the installation and recommending the best places for kids to play. Spouses can also receive training to become a sponsor.

## MILLIFE'S SPONSORSHIP AND YOU: SPONSORSHIP AWARENESS

Learn about what resources would be most helpful for you and your family. This course has resources for everyone moving in the military, whether you are moving with a family, a pet, an exceptional family member or just yourself.

## ACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE

This includes all the items you will take on the plane and/or pack in the car. Verify your baggage limits with your airline.

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Clothing                | • Snacks                       |
| • Toiletries              | • First Aid Kit                |
| • Medicines/Prescriptions | • Passport                     |
| • Games/Toys              | • Welcome Package for New Base |
| • Military Uniforms       | • Important Documents          |

## HOUSEHOLD GOODS (HHGS)

This is the bulk of your shipment including all of your furniture and anything not in your Unaccompanied and Accompanied Baggage. The “total weight allowance” the military will pay to ship depends on the member’s rank, whether you have dependents, and where you will be stationed. The total weight includes the weight of the Unaccompanied Baggage. A good estimate for how much everything in your house weighs is to figure on 1000 pounds per room (not including bathrooms, unless you have furniture in there). Add extra if you are shipping a refrigerator, washer and/or dryer, or if you have a lot of books, or other heavy items. A motorcycle can also be shipped in HHGs – it’s not counted as a shipped vehicle, but against the HHGs total weight (check with TMO for proper preparation before shipping).

**Note:** Be sure to check with TMO what constitutes as professional gear (pro-gear) as these items do not count toward the overall weight authorization.

## OVERSEAS/OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES (OCONUS)

There are many resources to help you with an OCONUS PCS. We recommend starting with your sponsor from your incoming unit. Contact the local A&FRC for resources, temporary supplies and more. Be sure to ask your local SLO about schools and education resources. Lastly, get on the local social media spouse pages to have any questions or concerns answered by your peers.

## UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE

This shipment is sent when your new assignment is overseas and includes the items you will need immediately upon arrival. You could be living off this shipment for two months or more, depending on where your new assignment is. Hold Baggage is packed separately from your household goods (HHGs), and will be transported more quickly than HHGs. Check with TMO to find out your Hold Baggage weight limit. The A&FRC has a Loan Locker to lend you dishes and other basic household items. Call ahead to see what is available.

- |                               |                        |                           |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Clothing (consider climate) | • Serving Utensils     | • Games/Toys              |
| • Pot Holders                 | • Shower Curtain/Hooks | • Electric Pan/Griddle    |
| • Can Opener                  | • Broom/Mop            | • Electronics/Chargers    |
| • Bottle Opener               | • Basic Tool Kit       | • Sporting Equipment      |
| • Bedding                     | • Dish Towels          | • Frequently Used Spices  |
| • Small Appliances            | • Vacuum               | • Sewing Kit              |
| • Dishware                    | • Extension Cords      | • Baby Equipment          |
| • Bath Towels                 | • Iron/Ironing Board   | • Kitchen Knives/Scissors |
| • Coffee Pot                  | • Folding Table/Chairs | • First Aid Kit           |

## STORAGE

**Non-temporary storage** is permitted when the amount of household goods that can be transported overseas is restricted or when servicemembers do not take all their possessions with them. Under such conditions, they are entitled to store goods at government expense for the length of their tours.

**Temporary storage** up to 90 days is permitted when a delay prevents servicemembers from moving into permanent housing at a new duty station. An additional 90 days may be requested through the local military transportation office.

## PLAN MY MOVE FROM MILITARY ONESOURCE

If you've received new orders, it's time to fire up a powerful tool that can help you take charge and master your move. Plan My Move is a Department of Defense online tool that simplifies the moving process, breaking it down into clear, manageable steps for both experienced and first-time movers, as well as family members and loved ones. Plan My Move helps you create personalized moving checklists, and offers tips about housing, transportation, finances and more. This online tool puts you and your family in charge of a smooth relocation to your new duty station.



## MILITARYINSTALLATIONS FROM MILITARY ONESOURCE

While you are planning your move to the next duty location, you may have questions or wish to reach out to a specific office or support function. MilitaryINSTALLATIONS is another application available through Military OneSource that provides comprehensive information, key programs and services, check-in procedures, local resources, maps, community information and more.

# SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

## **AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTER (A&FRC)**

A&FRC supports customers in achieving short- and long-term employment, education and training, and career goals through employment skills counseling, resources for self-employment, small business and entrepreneurial efforts. They offer labor market information, employment trend tracking, skills development workshops, job referrals, networks to local employers, and on- and off-base resources. Individual consultation and group classes/workshops are open to family members and civilian employees.

## **ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY SPOUSE ENTREPRENEURS (AMSE™)**

AMSE™ connects military spouse entrepreneurs with the tools and resources needed to become successful in launching and growing their businesses. AMSE is an exclusive community for military spouse entrepreneurs to learn how to launch, build or scale their own business. Military Spouses are always investing in their military member's education and career, their families, volunteering, and always think of themselves last! AMSE™ is an exclusive space for military spouses who want to take their future into their own hands, on their own terms.

## **BLUE STAR FAMILIES: SPOUSE FORCE**

This interactive, tech-forward online career portal from Blue Star Families is designed by military spouses, for military spouses. It is aimed at getting you connected with the tools you need to be successful in the workforce.

## **HIRING HEROES USA**

Hiring Heroes USA provides free online career coaching, assistance, and workshops to both spouses and veterans.

## **HIRING OUR HEROES MILITARY SPOUSE PROGRAM**

Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program includes education and networking, a Fellowship Program, online resources such as a military spouse road map, as well as in-person and virtual hiring events. Affiliated with Hiring Our Heroes, In Gear Career organizes and hosts in-person networking groups at military installations nationwide.

## **LINKEDIN**

The mission of LinkedIn is simple: connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. In collaboration with ID.me, LinkedIn offers U.S. servicemembers and veterans a free 1-year Premium Career subscription, including one year of access to LinkedIn Learning.

## **MILITARY.COM SPOUSE CAREERS**

From career ideas to acing the resume, the Military.com Spouse Career page has resources to help with spouse employment.

## **MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

Military Officers Association of America offers career coaching and networking events across the U.S. to help military spouses move forward with their careers.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIANS (MSBHC)**

MSBHC connects military spouse behavioral health clinicians with employment, education, and licensure resources.

## **MYCAA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

See MyCAA under Education on page 20.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE CORPORATE CAREER NETWORK (MSCCN)**

MSCCN offers free employment readiness training programs and job placement solutions.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP (MSEP)**

MSEP is a Defense Department funded job board listing openings at private companies that have committed to hiring military spouses and veterans. These companies have also committed to training their human resources departments to work with the military community's unique skills and experiences.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE JD NETWORK (MSJDN)**

MSJDN is a group for military spouse attorneys, it offers networking and advocacy for spouses seeking to continue their law careers.

## **THE MILSPO PROJECT**

The MilSpo Project supports military spouse entrepreneurs through local chapters, online resources and an annual conference.

## **MILITARY SPOUSE ADVOCACY NETWORK (MSAN)**

MSAN is committed to expanding Career and Employment program opportunities to support the needs of over 9,000 military spouse community members. There are a plethora of free resources available to help military spouses with the technical aspects of obtaining employment such as career coaching and professional resume assistance.

## **NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION (NMFA)**

NMFA offers help with understanding licensure rules, federal employment and unemployment resources for military spouses. Also offers financial assistance with licensure costs.

## **NATIONAL MILITARY SPOUSE NETWORK (NMSN)**

NMSN is the preeminent networking, mentoring and professional development organization committed to the education, empowerment and advancement of military spouses. NMSN creates a community of military spouse professionals, businesses, academics and media to share expertise and craft innovative solutions on both balancing a viable career with the military lifestyle and laying the foundation for a successful career post military life.

It can be incredibly challenging to build and sustain a business while supporting your military member and taking care of the family. I am incredibly grateful for the assistance the military spouse community provides with entrepreneurship to connect, collaborate, learn, and grow. In the past two years, I have been able to successfully co-own a work-from-home company that I can now take with me anywhere in the world. This is a terrific opportunity for the often-moving military family and peace of mind that I too, can maintain a proud career.

-Dr. Adam E., Air Force Spouse, Luke AFB

## **NONAPPROPRIATED FUND (NAF) POSITIONS**

NAF employment is federal employment where military spouses receive preference similar to USAJobs.

## **REIMBURSEMENT FOR RE-LICENSURE/RECERTIFICATION**

A reimbursement issued through finance of up to \$1,000 for occupational state relicensing/recertification cost due to a PCS/PCA.

### ***Program Eligibility:***

- File within 24 months of when PCS/PCA orders were authenticated
- PCS/PCA from a duty station in one state to a duty station in another state
- Movement of dependents is authorized government expense
- Demonstrate actual costs incurred for licensing/certification
- State of the new duty station requires license/certification for the same profession as the previous state

### ***Program Exclusions:***

- Reimbursement is not to exceed \$1,000
- Cost must be incurred and paid after the date the PCS/PCA orders were authenticated
- Not authorized for moves upon accession, Career Intermission Program, retirement or separation
- Not authorized for obtaining a new license or certification for new profession

### ***Required Documentation:***

- Copy of PCS/PCA orders
- Copy of spouse's valid state occupational license
- Paid receipts for items required to obtain licensing from new state

## **ROSIE JOBS**

Rosie Jobs is a job board operated by the non-profit Rosie Network.

## **SPOUSE EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES (SECO)**

SECO is a Defense Department site that works in tandem with the Military Spouse Employment Partnership to provide free job coaching, assessments, tools and resources for military spouses. The site includes tools for resume building, career assessments, creating career goals, exploring education and licensing and researching occupations.

## **SPOUSE LICENSURE PORTABILITY**

The Spouse Licensure Reciprocity website was built to better assist Spouses and Families facing licensure and certification challenges during relocation. The site is an interactive tool to connect users with key information, like specific military spouse licensure legislation and licensure bodies for each state.

## **U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)**

The SBA helps Americans start, build, and grow businesses. SBA was created to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, preserve free competitive enterprise and maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. Boots to Business (B2B) is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the SBA as part of the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The course provides an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals. Active duty servicemembers including National Guard, Reserve, Veterans of all eras, and spouses are eligible to participate.

## **USAJOBS**

USAJOBS connects job seekers with federal employment opportunities across the United States and around the world. As the Federal Government's official employment site, USAJOBS helps the right people find the right jobs. As a part of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), USAJOBS helps recruit and retain a world-class government workforce for the American people. Federal agencies use USAJOBS to host job openings and match qualified applicants to those jobs. It serves as the central place to find opportunities in hundreds of federal agencies and organizations. The U.S. Federal Government relies on more than two million Americans and foreign nationals to work in the civil service. Military spouses may be eligible to apply using a non-competitive process designed to get a job in the federal government. For further information, reach out to your local Civilian Personnel Section or A&FRC.

## **USO RALLY POINT 6 (RP/6)**

RP-6 connects veterans and families with resources in their communities.

## **VETERANS CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM (VCTP)**

For military spouses and veterans, VCTP offers free professional skills assistance and training through Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF).

## **VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES**

Here you will find information about interstate licensing, licensing reimbursement, occupations with interstate reciprocity agreements and resources to help find state-specific information about occupational requirements. We also have employment resources along with training and support for spouses of military members.

## **VIRTFORCE**

VirtForce seeks to connect active duty military spouses to verified remote careers. They desire to reduce the unemployment rate for Active Duty MilSpouses and Veterans by connecting employers seeking to diversify and distribute their talent network to qualified virtual candidates within the military community.

There will always be challenges and obstacles, but when you get through them, when you keep doing you and putting yourself out there, you will find your people. You will find your place. Get uncomfortable! And when you do, everything around you, including yourself, will blossom.

- Ashley B., Air Force Spouse, Charleston AFB



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## **AIRMAN'S ATTIC**

The Airman's Attic contains uniforms and other uniform related items, household goods, furniture, baby gear, toys and clothing available **free** of charge to Airmen and Guardians. Check individual bases for eligibility.

## **EXCHANGE**

The Exchange (or often referred to as the BX) is the military department store. Army Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES) mission is to provide quality merchandise and services at competitive prices (an estimated 25% discount) to active duty and retired, Reserve, Guard, and family members with proper military ID, and to generate reasonable earnings to supplement appropriated funds for the support of Air Force Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs and quality of life improvements. Facilities that make up the Exchange are: the Main Store, Auto Pride, Shoppette, Military Clothing and Sales and Food Court. Many family members have worked for years with AAFES as they have moved from one installation to another with their military members.

## **FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON (FSS)**

The FSS provides a variety of services supporting Airmen, Guardians, and their families in addition to retirees and DoD civilians; such as in-processing, professional military education, ID cards, dining facilities, and lodging. FSS also houses all of the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) elements on base. These programs include golf, bowling, outdoor recreation, auto hobby shop, arts and crafts and more. The FSS is responsible for providing military and civilian personnel, manpower and organization, education, professional military education, career enhancement, airman and family support services, and quality of life programs. For example, two of their facilities are listed below.

## **Base Library**

The Base Library serves all active duty and retired members, DoD civilian personnel, and family members. You must show your military ID to register for their services. Services include, but are not limited to: book lending, computer access, educational support, copy machines, monthly/seasonal activities, children's story times, summer reading programs, and educational seminars.

## **Fitness Center**

Most bases have one or more fitness centers (or gyms) dedicated to the physical fitness of active duty, retired, dependents and military ID card holders.

## **COMMISSARY**

The Commissary is the military grocery store. Base Commissaries are operated by Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) at installations stateside and around the world. Active duty and retired, Reserve and Guard (on orders), and family members with proper military ID can purchase food and other items at cost with no sales tax. Commissaries are required by law to sell items at prices set only high enough to recover item cost, with no profit or overhead factored into item price. Because the commissary charges you what it costs them, prices will vary from commissary to commissary, depending on local costs. You will see a 5% surcharge covers the operational costs – cashier’s salaries, electricity, etc.

## **HEALTH PROMOTION**

Health Promotion is the art and science of helping individuals, commands and the military community improve their health-related behaviors and outcomes. Health Promotion provides a range of evidenced-based interventions via programs and services that facilitate healthy living as the default lifestyle choice and social norm. Health Promotion fosters a culture and environment that values health and wellness; empowers individuals and organizations to lead healthy lives; and improves the health, mission readiness and productivity of the military community.

## **LEGAL OFFICE**

The Legal Office provides military families with powers of attorney, notaries, wills, assistance with paperwork for reimbursement on household goods claims, divorce and dependent care issues, Soldiers & Sailors Civil Relief Act, debtor-creditor issues, consumer law problems, veterans’ reemployment rights, landlord-tenant and lease issues, tax assistance, and involuntary allotment issues. They cannot assist military members or their families with establishing commercial enterprises, criminal issues, ethics violations, Law of Armed Conflict, issues the military has an interest in, legal concerns of other parties, drafting or reviewing legal documents, or representation in civil court.

## **THE NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY (NRD)**

NRD is a resource website that connects wounded warriors, servicemembers, veterans, their families, and caregivers to support programs and services. All resources are vetted and verified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and cover topics ranging from employment and financial management to child care and more.

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE COORDINATOR (SARC)**

The SARC serves as the installation’s primary point of contact for integrating and coordinating sexual assault victim care services for eligible adult recipients. Services may begin at the initial report of sexual assault and continue through disposition and resolution of issues related to the victim’s health and well-being. The SARC reports directly to the installation commander (or equivalent) or installation vice commander, executing the Air Force’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program at the installation level. SARCs assist unit commanders as necessary to ensure victims of sexual assault receive appropriate and responsive care.

## **SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL / VICTIMS' LEGAL COUNSEL**

The legal process for prosecuting sexual assault cases can often be daunting and confusing for victims. Most Judge Advocate General (JAG) officers in the military work for commanders and are required to inform them of incidents that happen within their command. The Department, working with the Services, has created a legal support function for victims of sexual assault that provides legal advice and guidance, and maintains a victim's confidentiality. A victim can access this support whether they file a Restricted or Unrestricted Report, even if they have not yet made an official report.

## **THRIFT SHOP**

Many bases have a thrift shop available to anyone with base access. It is typically organized and run by the base spouse club. Most thrift shops have a variety of items including: military clothing and uniforms, kids toys, clothes, and household items. The thrift shop funds a scholarship program and charitable community projects through donations and profits. The thrift shop is a great place to volunteer and grow your community. You can find information about volunteering and scholarship applications at your local A&FRC. Some thrift shops also offer a consignment option and will help you sell items while taking a percentage of the profit to put towards their scholarship program.

## **VETERINARY TREATMENT FACILITY (VTF)**

Some military installations have a VTF. Use is limited to active duty, retired, and family members enrolled in DEERS. DoD Veterinary Service is committed to standardization among VTFs. This means no matter which VTF you visit, the same services will be available at the same prices and care standards.

## **WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

As an untraditional enlisted spouse, I have become surprisingly more and more grateful for the military. It can be difficult to balance colliding two different worlds with your spouses' world always having the final say. Whether it's switching healthcare providers you've always had to understanding your spouse does not have the same autonomy over their career field that those in the civilian world do, becoming a military spouse requires an immense amount of time and patience to understand one of the most unique cultures in the world. Don't be afraid to jump in and get involved - you will be more easily embraced than you expect!

- Erica M, Air Force Spouse, Nellis AFB

# MILITARY LIFE

This section will teach you about the culture you live in. It will provide you with specific resources that you will need and helpful information that will empower you to navigate the military culture more gracefully.



# THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

## INTEGRITY FIRST

An Airman is a person of integrity, courage and conviction. They must be willing to control their impulses and exercise courage, honesty and accountability in order to do what is right even when no one is looking.

## SERVICE BEFORE SELF

An Airman's professional duties take precedence over personal desires. Every Airman is expected to have the discipline to follow rules, exhibit self-control and possess respect for the beliefs, authority and worth of others.

## EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO

An Airman strives for continual improvement in self and service in order to propel the Air Force further and to achieve greater accomplishment and performance for themselves and their community.

# AIM HIGH SEMPER SUPRA



# THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

## CHARACTER

We defend the Constitution and serve the nation. Consequently, high moral character and ethical standards are the foundation of our personal and professional lives. We embrace the virtues of integrity, grit, honesty, authenticity and trustworthiness. We are fully accountable for our decisions, actions, and inactions. We honor our obligations to our mission, our fellow Guardians, and our loved ones.

## CONNECTION

We are connected by a common purpose greater than ourselves. We are stronger together than we are individually. We seek out diversity and engage inclusivity knowing that harnessing different perspectives fuels innovation. We strengthen our teams and the security of our nation by treating everyone with dignity, empathy, and respect. Our approach allows us to tap into the best that each person has to offer.

## COMMITMENT

We are committed to the pursuit of mastery of ourselves, our profession, and our domain, knowing this is a lifelong journey and not a destination. We see opportunities to learn and grow with the help of our team where others see challenges and obstacles. We will make best use of the diverse and unique strengths of our teammates to achieve feats considered impossible by our adversaries.

## COURAGE

We do what needs to be done and say what needs to be said because it is right. We are steadfast and we hold to our convictions. We have the power to choose regardless of circumstance. We are biased toward action, accepting risk when necessary to secure and defend our domain. We act and speak fearlessly knowing our teammates and leadership are unwavering in their support.

# HERITAGE

## THE MILITARY CHALLENGE COIN

Military coins date back to a WWI encounter between a downed American flyer and French outpost. The French thought the flier to be a German saboteur and wanted to execute him. However, when the flier presented his unit insignia to his would-be executioners, they recognized his squadron. Rather than shoot him, his captors presented him with a bottle of wine.

When the flier returned to his squadron and related his experience, it soon became customary to carry a medallion or coin at all times for the following challenge: a challenger would ask to see the coin. If the challenged individual could not produce their coin, they were required to purchase a drink of choice for the challenger. However, if the challenged could produce the coin, then the challenger was required to pay for the drink.

This tradition has continued and grown in popularity over the years. Today, the rules of engagement demand that the coin be on your person at all times and that the owner is responsible for the coin's security.

### The Modern Coin Challenge

- If the coin strikes a hard surface, it constitutes a challenge and requires an immediate response in which all other coin owners must produce their coins.
- If everyone produces a coin, the challenger must buy a round of drinks for the group.
- If any coin owner fails to produce their coin, they must buy a round for all those producing theirs.

*There are several versions of coin history and tradition, but in any case, if you are a known coin owner, be sure to carry it "on your person" wherever you go!*

## THE MILITARY SALUTE

One of the most important military courtesies is the salute. It is a gesture of respect and a sign of comradeship among service personnel. Accordingly, it is a uniform gesture; meaning that the lower ranking member initiates the salute and the higher person in rank returns the salute in the same form in which it is rendered to them.

The salute probably originated in the days of chivalry when knights in mail raised their visors to friends for the purpose of identification. Because of strict adherence to rank, the junior was required to make the first gesture.

Still, another probable origin of a salute comes from the time when assassinations by dagger were not uncommon. It became the custom to approach each other with a raised hand, palm to the front, showing that there was no concealed weapon.

Regardless of its origin, the salute today is an important greeting and show of respect in the armed forces.

## THE BIRTH OF THE AIR FORCE

Air Force history began when the Army acquired America's first military aircraft, the Wright Flyer, on August 2, 1909, designated Signal Corps Airplane No. 1. The "aeroplane" was designed and created by Orville and Wilbur Wright. The demonstration flight took place on Fort Meyer, Virginia. Initially formed as a part of the United States Army on August 1, 1907, the USAF was established as a separate branch of the U.S. Armed Forces on September 18, 1947 with the passing of the National Security Act of 1947. The mission of the U.S. Air Force is to fly, fight, and win...airpower anytime, anywhere.

## THE BIRTH OF THE SPACE FORCE

The U.S. Space Force (USSF) is the newest branch of the Armed Forces, established December 20, 2019 with enactment of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. Prior to the Space Force's creation, U.S. military space operations were managed by the Air Force Space Command, a major command within the U.S. Air Force. The USSF was established within the Department of the Air Force, meaning the Secretary of the Air Force has overall responsibility for the USSF, under the guidance and direction of the Secretary of Defense. The Space Force is now the sixth branch of the U.S. military and the first U.S. military service unit to be created since the U.S. Air Force was born out of the Army Air Corps in 1947.

## THE SPACE FORCE SYMBOL

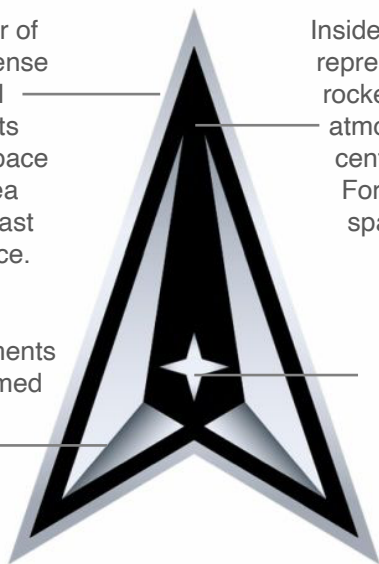
The delta was first used in 1961 and honors the heritage of the United States Air Force and the Space Command.

The silver outer border of the delta signifies defense and protection from all adversaries and threats emanating from the space domain. The black area inside embodies the vast darkness of deep space.

Inside the Delta, the two spires represent the action of a rocket launching into the outer atmosphere in support of the central role of the Space Force in defending the space domain.

The four beveled elements symbolize the joint armed forces supporting the space mission: Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines.

The center of the delta is the star Polaris, which symbolizes how the core values guide the Space Force mission.



A military spouse is flexible, mindful, and resilient. My advice, which is something another spouse told me, was there are no perfect bases. What is perfect for you won't be perfect for someone else. So, go out explore, embrace, and take advantage of every opportunity.

- Carey C., Air Force Spouse, JB Elmendorf-Richardson

## **AIRMAN'S CREED**

I am an American Airman.

I am a Warrior.

I have answered my Nation's call.

I am an American Airman.

My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.

I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,

A Tradition of Honor,

And a Legacy of Valor.

I am an American Airman.

Guardian of Freedom and Justice,

My Nation's Sword and Shield,

Its Sentry and Avenger.

I defend my Country with my Life.

I am an American Airman.

Wingman, Leader, Warrior.

I will never leave an Airman behind,

I will never falter,

And I will not fail.

## **THE U.S. AIR FORCE SONG "WILD BLUE YONDER"**

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,

Climbing high into the sun;

Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,

At 'em now, Give 'em the gun!

Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,

Off with one helluva roar!

We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!

Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!



# COMMAND HIERARCHY

The Air & Space Force are both overseen by the secretary of the Air Force, who has overall responsibility for organizing, training, and equipping the Air Force and Space Force.

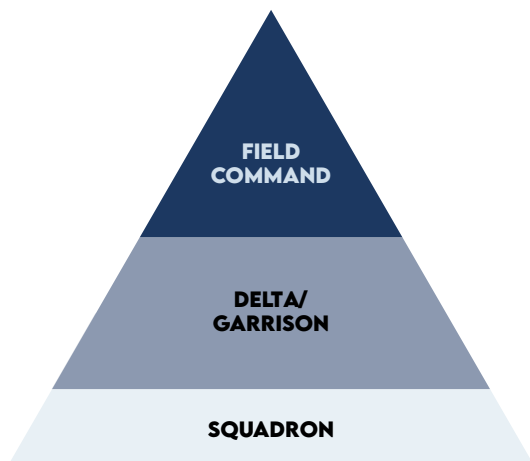
## AIR FORCE

The Air Force itself can be seen as a five-tier pyramid, whose foundational units are squadrons which come in a variety of sizes. Squadrons wrap up into groups, and groups into wings. Wings, in turn, wrap up into Numbered Air Forces (NAFs), which comprise the operational elements of the service's major commands. A MAJCOM is the highest level of command, only below Headquarters Air Force (HAF), and directly above numbered air forces (NAFs).



## SPACE FORCE

The Space Force is organized as one of two coequal military service branches within the Department of the Air Force, the other being the United States Air Force. The Space Force has adopted a three-tier pyramid. Squadrons wrap up into deltas and garrisons, which wrap into the three Field Commands. The three field commands are Space Operations Command, Space Systems Command and Space Training and Readiness Command.




My military community quickly became my military family. They include a beautiful mosaic of people that are spread around the globe and they encompass such different cultures and strengths. I have leaned on my military family for their skills and they have always stepped in to help and to guide my family when we needed it. I love them for always being there and loving us back.

- Megan L., Space Force Spouse, Peterson SFB

# RANK STRUCTURE






## AIR & SPACE FORCE OFFICER RANK & INSIGNIA





O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
					
Second Lieutenant (2LT)	First Lieutenant (1LT)	Captain (Capt)	Major (Maj)	Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol)	Colonel (Col)
O-7	O-8	O-9	O-10		
					
Brigadier General (BrigGen)	Major General (MajGen)	Lieutenant General (LtGen)	General (Gen)		

They say military service is a family affair and I believe it! My grandfather proudly served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and transferred to the newly formed U.S. Air Force in 1947. More recently, my husband served in the U.S. Air Force and transferred to the newly formed U.S. Space Force in 2021. Pinning on with my grandfather's rank in the Space Force, this rank has officially been worn in three Branches symbolically not only uniting our family ties of the past, the present and the future, but also our proud military heritage!







- Jessica N., Space Force Spouse, The Pentagon





AIR FORCE ENLISTED RANK STRUCTURE & INSIGNIA

E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6
No Insignia					
	Airman	Airman First Class	Senior Airman	Staff Sergeant	Technical Sergeant

E-7	E-8	E-9	
			
Master Sergeant	Senior Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

SPACE FORCE ENLISTED RANK STRUCTURE & INSIGNIA

E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6
					
Specialist 1	Specialist 2	Specialist 3	Specialist 4	Sergeant	Technical Sergeant

E-7	E-8	E-9	
			
Master Sergeant	Senior Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force

# DEERS

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is a computerized database of military sponsors, families, and others worldwide who are entitled to TRICARE and other benefits. Servicemembers are automatically registered in DEERS, but you must register your family members and make sure all the information is correct to ensure TRICARE coverage.

## VERIFYING AND UPDATING DEERS

Sponsors or registered family members can make address changes, but only the sponsor can add or delete family members. Documentation is required. To verify or update DEERS, you can:

- Contact TRICARE managed support contractor
- Visit your local TRICARE service center
- Visit the <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>
- Visit your personnel office (ID card facility)
- Contact Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office
  - 800-538-9552
  - Visit [TRICARE.mil/DEERS](https://TRICARE.mil/DEERS)

Any changes that impact you or your family (e.g., marriage, birth, divorce, death) need to be reported to DEERS so that eligibility can start or stop. If you reenlist, separate, retire, or move, make sure your information gets updated in DEERS as soon as possible. If you do not, you and your family might experience a break in eligibility, which means a break in health care coverage. Once you retire, you need to make sure DEERS reflects your change from active duty to retiree status. Retail network pharmacies check TRICARE eligibility through DEERS. Your prescriptions will be filled only if you are in the system.

***Each family member must be updated separately when changes occur.***

# KEEP DEERS UPDATED

# OPSEC

Operations Security (OPSEC) is a war fighting capability used to identify and protect military “bits and pieces” of sensitive information from people who wish to do us harm. This sensitive information, if collected by an adversary, can provide indicators pointing to our future activities and give them an advantage. It is not being dramatic to state that lapses of OPSEC can lead to mission failure and even the death of military members. Adversaries see military family members as soft targets and an easy source of useful information. Remember to use good judgement with what you post on social media, while keeping OPSEC in mind

- Don't share specific information about the mission of assigned units.
- Don't share specific dates and locations of deployments.
- Don't list your servicemember's specific job on the internet.
- Don't share your servicemember's exact location overseas.
- Don't share anything about unit morale or equipment.
- Don't share anything about deployment schedules or itineraries.
- Don't share exact dates your servicemember is scheduled to return.

**Note:** This is not an all-inclusive list. Engage your local OPSEC POC for more information about specific OPSEC do's and dont's for your unit.



# MILITARY PAY

## TYPES OF PAY

Military members receive different types of pay and allowances, which are determined by rank, years of service, specific duties and skills, base location, and whether or not there are family dependents. Refer to [DefenseTravel.dod.mil](https://DefenseTravel.dod.mil) for DoD calculator and BAH rates and [DFAS.mil](https://DFAS.mil) or [MyPay.DFAS.mil](https://MyPay.DFAS.mil) for military pay tables and other information on pay and allowances.

### Basic Pay

Every military member receives basic pay, which is usually the largest portion of pay. The amount of basic pay is determined by rank/pay grade and length of time in the military. Basic pay is taxable income. Marriage status does not affect this type of pay.

### Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)

BAS is a non-taxable allowance to help offset costs for a servicemember's food. BAS is the same whether or not you have dependents, as it is not intended to offset costs of meals for family members. All officers receive a set BAS. Enlisted members receive full BAS, but pay for their meals (including those government-provided). Because BAS is intended to provide meals for the servicemember, its level is linked to the price of food. Therefore, each year BAS is adjusted based upon the increase of the price of food as measured by the USDA food cost index.

### Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)

BAH is a non-taxable allowance for housing. It is authorized to assist members by defraying housing costs when not assigned government quarters. The amount of BAH is determined by rank/grade, dependency/family status, and location. Servicemembers with dependents receive a higher allowance. This allowance partially compensates servicemembers for their housing expenses if they live in civilian communities. A servicemember with a family who lives in government family-type quarters is not entitled to BAH. A servicemember without a family who lives in the dorms receives partial BAH. For a dual-military couple (servicemember married to another servicemember), both members are entitled to BAH. If the couple has dependent children, only one servicemember is entitled to BAH at the with-dependents rate.

### Clothing Allowance

Clothing Allowance is a non-taxable allowance. Enlisted members are issued uniforms when first inducted into the military. They also receive a replacement clothing maintenance allowance each year after that. This is always in an end-of-month paycheck, usually the month of the enlistment anniversary. Officers receive an initial allowance to purchase military clothing and do not receive a replacement clothing allowance. For certain duty assignments, officers and enlisted members may receive an allowance for civilian clothing.

## **Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)**

COLA is a taxable allowance paid to servicemembers to help offset the effects of higher cost areas in the CONUS since the basic pay tables do not vary based on location. COLA indexes for living costs are set for all areas of the United States and adjusted annually. COLA may vary based on your current rank/pay grade, time in service, and family/dependent status, and is based on the zip code of your duty station and not your home address. Even if the servicemember is assigned for a tour of duty outside CONUS, the dependent family member may be eligible to continue to receive the COLA.

## **Direct Deposit**

Direct Deposit is the electronic transfer of pay to a bank account. It is the fastest and safest way to get your money. All military members are required to have Direct Deposit.

## **Dislocation Allowance (DLA)**

DLA is a non-taxable allowance paid to partially reimburse a servicemember for expenses incurred in relocating the household on a PCS, ordered for the Government's convenience, or incident to evacuation. The amount is determined by the servicemember's rank/grade and dependency status. DLA can be paid in advance; if not, then request DLA upon arrival at the new base.

## **Family Separation Allowance (FSA)**

FSA is non-taxable allowance paid when servicemembers are separated from their dependents because of official duty assignments to help pay for maintaining two residences. An active duty member qualifies for FSA when separated by military orders from their family for 30 days or more. FSA is paid retroactive to the beginning of the separation, at a rate of \$250 per month (pro-rated for periods less than one month).

## **Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (OCOLA)**

OCOLA is a non-taxable allowance paid to servicemembers assigned overseas to offset higher costs of living for such items as food, clothing, and transportation. It is calculated by comparing the prices of goods and services overseas with average prices for equivalent goods and services in CONUS. The result of this comparison is an index that reflects a cost of living. If prices in CONUS are rising at a greater rate than those overseas, COLA will decrease. If prices overseas are rising at a greater rate than those in CONUS, COLA will increase. Similarly, if overseas prices rise or fall at the same rate as CONUS prices, COLA will stay the same. Nearly 600 locations overseas currently have costs of living that exceed national military averages.

## **Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)**

OHA is a non-taxable allowance paid to servicemembers assigned overseas and authorized to live off-base to help offset the higher cost of housing. OHA can change based on the current rate of exchange and is reviewed at least every six months. It also includes an allowance for utilities; this amount is based on surveys from military in the area, regardless of rank/pay grade.

## **SPECIAL AND INCENTIVE PAY AND BONUSES**

Servicemembers receive special pay when they serve under hazardous conditions, and for other kinds of duty or needed skills (often called proficiency pay). Bonuses can be awarded for enlistment or reenlistment, especially to recruits or members with critical skills. In general, incentive pay and bonuses are taxable.

**Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay** is for service within an officially designated hostile fire/imminent danger zone area. The servicemember receives imminent danger pay only for days they actually spend in hazardous areas.

**Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay** is given for service that involves particular dangers, including handling fuel and toxic chemicals, and parachute jumping. Aviation Career Incentive Pay (Flight Pay) includes extra pay and bonuses that can be given to aviators and aircrew members.

**Hardship Duty Location Pay** compensates service in areas of assignment with extraordinary arduous quality-of-life conditions.

**Voluntary/Involuntary Separation Pay** helps with transition from active duty.

**Enlistment and Reenlistment Bonuses** may be paid for critical skills, and are used to encourage recruitment and retention of servicemembers.

**Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus** is discretionary pay for servicemembers with proficiency in foreign languages and dialects.

## **PAY WITHHOLDING OR DEDUCTIONS**

### **Federal Income Tax**

Servicemembers must pay Federal Income Tax on their basic and other pay amounts. A portion of pay is withheld from each paycheck to cover tax obligations; servicemembers should check amounts withheld to verify they will meet their tax obligations.

### **State Income Tax**

Generally speaking, servicemembers pay state income tax only to the state of their legal residence, regardless of where they are stationed. The appropriate amount is automatically withheld from each paycheck and differs from state-to-state. Non-military income is taxable in the state in which it is earned. Because state laws are varied and complicated, the Legal Office should be consulted for specific questions.

### **Social Security Tax**

Only basic pay is taxable for Social Security and the appropriate amount is automatically withheld from each paycheck.

### **Medicare Tax**

Only basic pay is taxable for Medicare and the appropriate amount is automatically withheld from each paycheck.



## **Garnishment of Wages**

Military pay is subject to garnishment of wages. Once there is a court order directing a servicemember to pay child support or alimony, the military can withhold part of their salary to cover these payments. Local laws will be followed to decide how much money, if any, will be withheld. The Legal office can offer advice, but cannot represent military personnel in a pay garnishment situation. Military members can avoid being taken to court and having their wages garnished by being sure they have met their moral and legal obligations.

## **Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)**

SGLI or Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) SGLI/FSGLI is low-cost term insurance for servicemembers.

## **Payment While Away**

The military requires that a servicemember's pay be direct deposited. Servicemembers can arrange with their bank to transfer money to a checking or savings account and set transfers to pay rent, utilities, and other bills. Married servicemembers should consider establishing a joint bank account to allow a spouse to pay bills and provide for their household. Servicemembers subject to deployment should consider signing a specific power of attorney (POA) for financial affairs at their base legal office. The base finance office cannot help a spouse who does not have a POA for financial affairs.

## **Allotments**

Servicemembers can use allotments in their military pay system to help take care of their financial responsibilities. Allotments are portions of pay the servicemember sends to specific institutions or people for such purposes as saving, investment, family support and insurance premiums.

## **Blended Retirement System (BRS)**

The "blending" in BRS comes from the blending of two major sources of retirement income: the existing annuity provision (the military pension) for those who retire after 20 or more years of service, plus the TSP.

Find more information at [militarypay.defense.gov/blended-retirement/](https://militarypay.defense.gov/blended-retirement/)

The military has offered us so much financial education. We have the opportunity to use the VA Loan to purchase a home (with no money down) and then connect with financial counselors to help us manage the money we made when selling our home. Getting financial counseling is not something to be ashamed of - it's a huge step in the right direction when planning for your future. If you haven't already, start investing into TSP. Move your money into higher risk categories to help it grow faster!

- Laura B., Air Force Spouse, USAF Academy

## Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The TSP is a government run 401(k) retirement account that allows members to invest their own money in stocks, bonds and government securities. Servicemembers in the Blended Retirement System also receive DoD contributions to their TSP account. TSP gives you a long-term retirement savings and investment plan. Thousands of DoD and federal government civilians take advantage of TSP for their retirement savings. By contributing to the TSP, military members can leave the service at any time and take this existing retirement account with them. Servicemembers who leave the military before completing 20 years can keep their money in TSP, take it out (not recommended), or move it to a different retirement account (such as an IRA or 401k) to continue the tax savings. For servicemembers in BRS the DoD will automatically contribute an amount equal to 1% of your base pay to your TSP account. The DoD will also match up to 5% of your own contributions from base pay. You can set your TSP contribution level at MyPay, as well as choose traditional or Roth tax treatment for your TSP contributions; adults in their 20s or 30s might consider making Roth contributions. Talk to a financial counselor at the A&FRC to find out more.

**Note:** Problems with military pay happen from time to time particularly during relocation and deployment. It's important to always check your LES for any overpayment as well as underpayments. With an overpayment, the military will often recover the full amount from the member's next paycheck without notice. Visit your Finance office immediately when a pay discrepancy is identified.



[Click here to see a detailed breakdown of the LES document.](#)

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCES CAN RELIEVE STRESS

# PROTOCOL

## TYPES OF CEREMONIES AND EVENTS

### Awards and Decorations

The Air Force & Space Force present many levels of awards in recognition of service or achievement. A commander's timely presentation of the appropriate decoration at a public ceremony greatly enhances the value of the award to the recipient and is a motivator for the entire unit. Awards and decorations ceremonies range from formal reviews to presentations at commander's calls and much smaller informal office ceremonies, depending largely on the recipient's desires. The basic elements of this ceremony include the reading of the official orders and the presentation of the award or decoration. Dress for these events ranges from casual to business suit/informal. Spouses and family members are invited and encouraged to attend.

### Changes of Command

The change of command ceremony is a clear, legal, and symbolic passing of authority and responsibility from one commander to the next. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the new commander and spouse will typically host a reception immediately afterwards, which may include a receiving line. By tradition, the out-going commander and spouse seldom attend this reception as a courtesy. Dress for a change of command is usually business suit/informal, but may also be casual.

### Formal Military Dinners

Formal military dinners are a tradition in all branches of the armed forces. The Dining-In and Dining-Out represent the most formal aspects of Air & Space Force social life. A Dining-In or Dining-Out is designed so that members can celebrate formally as a unit but also enjoy frivolity with various forms of skits and entertainment interspersed. There are "Rules of the Mess" which are designed to conform to tradition and promote levity. Violators of these rules are subject to the mischievousness of Mister/Madam Vice President of the Mess. Assigned "penalties" are humorous and carried out at the Mess.

**Dining-In** is a formal dinner for members of a wing or a squadron.

**Dining-Out** is the same as Dining-In but includes spouses and guests.

**Combat Dining-In** is far less formal for members of a wing or a squadron.

**Combat Dining-Out** is the same as Dining-In but includes spouses and guests.

***Note:** Dining-In is reserved for military members only; however, civilians may be included when they work in the unit.*

## Promotions

The promotion ceremony is important to the fabric of the military, as it recognizes members for their selection to serve in the next higher rank/grade and to accept the increased responsibility that follows. The basic elements of this ceremony are similar to that of the awards and decorations ceremonies, with the reading of the official orders and the pinning of the new rank/insignia. Spouses and family members are invited to participate in the promotion ceremony for the “pin-on.” Dress for these events ranges from casual to business suit/informal.

## Receiving Lines

The word reception means the act of receiving or greeting. A receiving line is a practical and efficient way to accomplish this greeting. In the military, receiving lines are frequently used to greet a new commander and spouse after a change of command ceremony, at commander’s receptions honoring civic leaders and visiting DVs, and at traditional holiday receptions. An announcer leads the receiving line to introduce guests to the host or commander. The commander’s aide or protocol officer may act in this capacity.

## Retirements

Recognition of members who are retiring from a career of long, faithful, and honorable service is one of the oldest traditions of military service. Each retiree should leave the service with a tangible expression of appreciation for their contribution with the assurance that they will continue to be a member of the Air & Space Force family in retirement. The retiree’s spouse is also honored in the ceremony for their dedication and service. Guests’ children are typically not invited unless the retiree specifically includes them. Dress is business suit/informal.

## Other Events

You may be invited to a variety of other events and gatherings, such as teas, coffees, Reveille and Retreat, activation and inactivation of units, and ribbon cutting ceremonies. If stationed at a joint base, you may be invited to events specific to that service. Do not hesitate to go, as it’s important to learn about traditions from all of the armed forces. For questions, contact the hosting unit.

When I was 19 years old I lost my parents, my role models. I soon after became a military spouse and spent my whole adult life so far in this unique community that is rich in patriotism, selfless service, and integrity. Some say that the soul of teaching is imitation and that we learn by watching others. Over the last 20 years I have watched my military community and can attribute most of my success as a military spouse, wife, and mother to my fellow military spouses. They taught me, by their example, how to be the best version of me. Military spouse life molded me into who I am today and I know my parents would not only approve but they would be very proud.

-A very lucky girl and military spouse

## DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Here you will find examples of the most common dress categories as well as clothing and events that could potentially fall within those categories. Dress for events is typically determined by the host, current fashion, local customs, time, and type of event. You can always ask the host or hostess for the exact attire category or expectation before the event if you are uncertain. Ask friends/colleagues, consider current trends and what is appropriate for the audience in question to help you determine what types of items are appropriate for your specific event.

### Formal Attire

**Civilian:** Ball Gowns, Long Evening Dress, Formal Pant Suit, Tuxedo, Wing-tip Shirt, Formal Cocktail Attire, Black Tie Attire, etc.

**Military:** Mess Dress

**Types of Events:** Official Functions, Evening Functions, Christmas Parties, etc.

### Semi-Formal

**Civilian:** Long or Short Evening Gown, Cocktail Dress, Suit or Pant Suit, Sport Coat and Tie, Evening or Cocktail Attire, etc.

**Military:** Service Dress

**Types of Events:** Parties, Cocktail Events, Retirements, Award Ceremonies, etc.

### Informal or Business Casual

**Civilian:** Dress, Skirt, Slacks, Blouse, Business Suit, Short or Long Sleeved Open Neck Shirt, Sweater, Sports Coat without Tie, low or flat shoes, etc. Jeans are acceptable **only** when stated on the invitation.

**Military:** Uniform of the day

**Types of Events:** Parades, Ceremonies, Reviews, Official Visits of US or Foreign Dignitaries, etc.

**Note:** *Business Casual or Informal dress often varies and must be appropriate based on the event. Some events listed as Informal or Business Casual may be more dressy than others like a visit from a US Dignitary versus an office party.*

### Civilian Casual

**Civilian:** Slacks, Blouse, Jeans, Nice Top, Open Collar Shirt, Golf Shirt, No Coat, Sandals, Flats, etc.

**Military:** Uniform of the Day or Civilian Attire

**Types of Events:** Picnics, Work Parties, etc.

## NAMES AND TITLES

When addressing someone in a military setting, we recommend starting with formal titles, Sir or Ma'am. If the person asks you to call them something different, please feel free to do so.

## REVEILLE AND RETREAT

**Reveille** occurs in the morning on bases. Each base has set times for reveille. When reveille sounds, you should stop, be silent, wait until it is over. If you are in your car driving, stop the car, turn down the radio and wait until it is over.

**Retreat** occurs at the end of the day on bases. Each base has set times for retreat. These times could change with the seasons as well. When retreat sounds and you are outside you should stop, when the star spangled banner starts, place your hand over your heart, if a veteran you may salute if you prefer. If you are driving you should stop the car, turn down the radio and wait until the music is over.

## HONORS TO THE FLAG

During the National Anthem, face flag or music and put right hand over heart (both indoors and outdoors). Retreat is usually sounded with the National Anthem at the end of the duty day. Civilians should face the flag or in the direction of the flag and place right hand over heart. If driving a vehicle, come to a stop in a safe place with your flashers on until the playing of the National Anthem is complete and the flag is lowered and secured.

## HELPFUL HINTS

- Always stand (and sing) for the Air Force song, which is typically played at the conclusion of an official function.
- If the invitation has an RSVP or "Please respond," you should reply within two days of receiving the invitation, or by the "respond by" date if one is indicated.
- Children are typically not invited to a function unless specified.
- When invited to a dinner or gathering at someone's private residence, be on time or slightly (five minutes) late, but NEVER arrive early. If you are going to be more than 10 minutes late, call host/hostess to let them know.
- It's courteous to bring an inexpensive but thoughtful host/hostess gift to the function, but not at all required.
- Always try to greet your host/hostess upon arriving to an event and then thank them before departing.
- Send a thank you to the host/hostess within seven days.
- A good way to remember where to place your name tag is with the phrase "right is right" which corresponds to extending your right hand for a handshake following the line of sight to the name tag.

# FORCE PROTECTION

## FORCE PROTECTION (FP) CONDITIONS

The following is a brief explanation of FP Conditions. The specific measures (such as ID card checking) carried out under each condition can vary from base to base, in the continental U.S. and overseas. If you have questions about FP Conditions talk to the Security Forces personnel at your military base.

### Normal

There is a general threat of terrorist activity that warrants a routine security posture, including access control to all DoD installations.

### Alpha

There is the threat of possible activity against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Increase your vigilance against a possible local threat against Air & Space Force resources.

### Bravo

There is the increased and more predictable threat of possible activity against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Maximize your vigilance against a possible local threat against Air & Space Force resources. Be cognizant of who does and who doesn't belong in your work area.

### Charlie

An incident occurs or intelligence is received that indicates imminent terrorist acts against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Secure all work areas and implement 100% identification and entry control procedures for all facilities. Look for suspicious activity and report it immediately.

### Delta

A terrorist attack occurs at the base, or intelligence is received that indicates a terrorist attack will be directed against the base, or against resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Secure all work areas and implement 100% identification and entry control procedures for all facilities. Look for suspicious activity and report it immediately.

## HEALTH PROTECTION CONDITION (HPCON) LEVELS

<b>Zero</b>	Routine	No Community Transmission
<b>Alpha</b>	Limited	Community Transmission Beginning
<b>Bravo</b>	Moderate	Increased Community Transmission
<b>Charlie</b>	Substantial	Sustained Community Transmission
<b>Delta</b>	Severe	Widespread Community Transmission

# MILITARY TIME

## THE 24 HOUR CLOCK

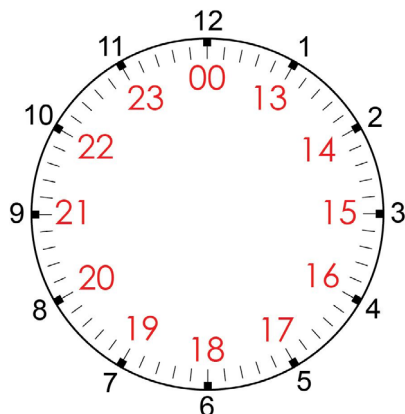
Military time is a method of measuring the time based on the full twenty-four hours of the day rather than two groups of twelve hours. It's also known as the twenty-four-hour clock. Using military time simply omits the need to use AM and PM and avoids any confusion on which half of the day you are referencing.

Just like a 12-hour digital clock, military time is always displayed in four digits. The first two digits represent the hour and the last two digits represent the minutes. 0000 “zero-hundred” is midnight and 1200 “twelve-hundred” is noon.

Anything between 0001 and 1159 is AM time. For example, 0100 “zero, one-hundred” converts into 1AM and 0730 “zero, seven-thirty” converts into 7:30AM.

Anything between 1201 and 2359 is PM time. The PM hours usually give people more trouble. A quick trick you can use is add 12 to the hour. If you want to know what 4 p.m. converts to on the 24-hour clock, take 4 and add 12. It gives you 16. Convert that to time format and you have 1600 “sixteen-hundred.”

1:00 am = 0100	Oh-one hundred
2:00 am = 0200	
3:00 am = 0300	
4:00 am = 0400	
5:00 am = 0500	The above times are also known as “oh-dark-thirty”
6:00 am = 0600	
7:00 am = 0700	
8:00 am = 0800	
9:00 am = 0900	
10:00 am = 1000	Ten hundred
11:00 am = 1100	
12:00 am = 1200	Noon or Twelve-hundred
1:00 pm = 1300	Thirteen hundred
2:00 pm = 1400	
3:00 pm = 1500	
4:00 pm = 1600	
5:00 pm = 1700	
6:00 pm = 1800	
7:00 pm = 1900	
8:00 pm = 2000	Twenty hundred
9:00 pm = 2100	
10:00 pm = 2200	
11:00 pm = 2300	
12:00 pm = 2400	Midnight, twenty-four hundred, or zero-hundred (0000)





# USAF & USSF INSTALLATIONS

## CONUS

Alabama	Maxwell AFB Gunter Annex Davis-Monthan AFB Luke AFB Little Rock AFB Beale AFB Edwards AFB Los Angeles AFB March AFB Travis AFB Vandenberg SFB Buckley SFB Cheyenne Mountain SFB Peterson SFB Schriever SFB USAF Academy
Arizona	Dover AFB JB Anacostia-Bolling The Pentagon
Arkansas	Cape Canaveral SFS Eglin AFB Hurlburt Field MacDill AFB Patrick SFB Tyndall AFB Moody AFB Robins AFB Mountain Home AFB Scott AFB McConnell AFB Barksdale AFB JB Andrews Cape Cod SFS Hanscom AFB Westover AFB Columbus AFB Keesler AFB Whiteman AFB Malstrom AFB Offutt AFB Creech AFB Nellis AFB
California	New Boston AFS JB McGuire-Dix- Lakehurst Cannon AFB Holloman AFB Kirtland AFB Pope Airfield Seymour Johnson AFB Cavalier SFS Grand Forks AFB Minot AFB Wright-Patterson AFB Altus AFB Tinker AFB Vance AFB JB Charleston Shaw AFB Ellsworth AFB
Colorado	
Delaware	
D.C.	
Florida	
Georgia	
Idaho	
Illinois	
Kansas	
Louisiana	
Maryland	
Massachusetts	
Mississippi	
Missouri	
Montana	
Nebraska	
Nevada	
New Hampshire	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	
North Carolina	
North Dakota	
Ohio	
Oklahoma	
South Carolina	
South Dakota	

## Tennessee Texas

Arnold AFB  
Dyess AFB  
Goodfellow AFB  
JB San Antonio  
Laughlin AFB  
Sheppard AFB  
Hill AFB  
JB Langley-Eustis  
Fairchild AFB  
F.E. Warren AFB

## Utah Virginia Washington Wyoming

## OCONUS

Alaska	Clear AFS Eielson AFB Joint Base Elmendorf- Richardson JBER Canberra Kleine Brogel AB Buechel AB Geilenkirchen NATO AB Kalkar AF Element Ramstein AB Spangdahlem AB Thule AB JR Marianas Andersen AFB Kaena Point AFS JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam Papa AB Diego Garcia Aviano AB Gheddi AB Kadena AB Misawa AB Yakota AB Kunsan AB Osan AB Ankara Volkel AB Stavanger Lajes Field Ascension Island Moron AB Incirlik AB Izmir AS RAF Alconbury RAF Corughton RAF Fairford RAF Fylendales RAF Lakenheath RAF Mildenhall RAF Molesworth
Australia	
Belgium	
Germany	
Greenland	
Guam	
Hawaii	
Hungary	
Indian Ocean	
Italy	
Japan	
Korea	
Middle East	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Portugal	
South Atlantic	
Spain	
Turkey	
U.K.	

**CONUS** - Continental United States  
**OCONUS** - Outside the Continental United States

**AFB** - Air Force Base      **SFB** - Space Force Base  
**AFS** - Air Force Station      **SFS** - Space Force Station  
**AB** - Air Base      **JB** - Joint Base  
**RAF** - Royal Air Force

*Note: This is not an all inclusive list.*

# MILITARY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

<b>A</b>	
AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Service - also called the BX covers the retail stores on the installation available to authorized users (someone who has a valid military ID card, e.g. active duty member, family member, retiree, or spouse of a retiree).
AB	Air Base (Overseas)
ABW	Air Base Wing - Provides base operating support for an Air Force Base.
ACC	Air Combat Command
Accompanied Tour	Tour of duty with family members
ACSC	Air Command and Staff College
AD	Active Duty
ADSC	Active Duty Service Commitment
Advanced Pay	Payment before actually earned
AEF	Air Expeditionary Force - Deployed Air Force wings, groups, and squadrons committed to a joint operation.
AETC	Air Education Training Command
AFAF	Air Force Assistance Fund - Annual campaign to raise money for four official Air Force charitable organizations.
AFAS	Air Force Aid Society - Organization located at the A&FRC that provides emergency financial assistance to active duty, retirees, and their family.
AFB	Air Force Base
AFI	Air Force Instruction (Regulations)
AFIT	Air Force Institute of Technology
AFMC	Air Force Materiel Command
A&FRC	Airman & Family Readiness Center is to provide targeted support and services to Airmen, Guardian, and their family members contributing to mission readiness, resiliency, and the well-being of the Department of the Air Force community.
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
Allotment	Designated payment by member to bank or individual
Allowance	Pay and special compensation
ALS	Airman Leadership School
AMC	Air Mobility Command
AMN	Airman
ANG	Air National Guard
APO	Air Post Office (overseas)
ARC	American Red Cross
Article 15	Disciplinary action
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
AT	Annual Tour
AWOL	Absent Without Leave - When a military member is away from duty without authorized leave
<b>B</b>	
BAH	Basic Allowance for Housing - The intent of BAH is to provide uniformed servicemembers accurate and equitable housing compensation based on housing costs in local civilian housing markets. Replaced Basic Allowance for Quarters or BAQ.
Barracks	Where military members who are not accompanied by family members live (aka dorms).
BAS	Basic Allowance for Subsistence - Meant to offset costs for a member's meals. Each year it is adjusted based upon the increase of the price as measured by the USDA food cost index.
Benefits	Medical, dental, commissary, BX, etc
Blues	Dress uniform
BX/PX	Base Exchange (Managed through AAFES)
<b>C</b>	
CC	Commander - The officer in charge of an entire unit of military members.
CCAF	Community College of the Air Force
CCC	Command Chief Master Sergeant
CCF	first sergeant
CDC	Career Development Course
CDC	Child Development Center
CE	Civil Engineer
CFC	Combined Federal Campaign - Annual charity fundraising for multiple charities
Chain of Command	This is the leadership structure of the military established rank for both enlisted and officers.
Civilian	Refers to civilian employees who work for the Department of Defense.
COB	Close of Business
Code of Conduct	Rules by which military members must live
COLA	Cost of Living Allowance

Commissary	The base grocery store available to authorized users (someone who has a valid military ID card, e.g. active duty member, family member, retiree, or spouse of a retiree). No sales tax is added but there is a small surcharge.
CONUS	Continental United States - Forty-eight adjoining states and the District of Columbia (does not include Alaska or Hawaii)
Court martial	Trial system within the military
CSS	Commander's Support Staff (Squadron's main administrative office)

## D

DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency (See Commissary)
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System - Registration system for benefits for military members and their family
Deployment	Relocation of a military unit/member for operation purposes outside the United States for an extended and specific period of time.
DEROS	Date Estimate Return from Overseas
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service - Organization which monitors military pay
Dining In	Formal dinner for military members only
Dining Out	Formal dinner for military members and spouses
DITY	Do-It-Yourself Move
DOB	Date of Birth
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDDS	Department of Defense Dependent Schools
DOR	Date of Rank
DOS	Date of Separation
Down Day	A day off for military members, not counted against leave.
DPP	Deferred Payment Plan
DSN	Defense Switched Network - Worldwide military telephone system

## E

EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program Enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, educational, medical, and personnel services to families with special needs.
EFMP-S	Exceptional Family Member Program – Support - Housed in the Airman & Family Readiness Center and designed to provide support to those with special needs.
Enlisted	An individual who is not commissioned (see NCO); either an Airman (rank of E-1 to E-4) or an NCO (noncommissioned officer, rank of E-5 to E-9).
EPR	Enlisted Performance Report
Esprit De Corp	Morale within unit or organization
ETS	Expiration of Term of Service - Scheduled date of separation from active duty

## F

Family Advocacy	Program that addresses family issues and concerns.
Field Grade	Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, and Colonels
First Sergeant	A key member of every squadron, the first sergeant (or "Shirt" as sometimes called) is a senior NCO (see below), who has received specialized training in dealing with "people issues." The first sergeant works directly for and with the squadron commander. He/she is knowledgeable about on-base resources available to assist in finding answers/solving problems, as well as managing the recognition of active duty military members' superior performances. The first sergeant also responds to emergencies within his/her squadron.
FCC	Family Childcare - Childcare provided in a licensed provider's home.
FLT Flight	Formation Gathering of military in a prescribed way

## G

GI Bill	Education entitlement
GOV	Government Owned Vehicle
GS	General Schedule (Civil Service employee)
GСУ	Geographically Separated Unit

## H

HAWC	Health and Wellness Center
HHG	Household Goods
Hold Baggage	Unaccompanied baggage or personal belongings
Housing Office	Responsible for managing base housing
HQ	Headquarters (Generally commander's office)

<b>I</b>	
IAW	In Accordance With
ID Card	Identification card issued to legally recognized member of military family.
IG	Inspector General
<b>J</b>	
JAG	Judge Advocate General (also known as the Base Legal Office)
<b>K</b>	
K-9	Dogs specifically trained for military service; also known as Military Working Dogs (MWD).
<b>L</b>	
Last 4	The last four numbers of a person's Social Security number.
Leave	Approved time away from duty.
LES	Leave and Earnings Statement Pay stub
<b>M</b>	
Mess Dress	Formal attire for the military member
MFLC	Military and Family Life Consultant
MPS	Military Personnel Section (formerly MPF/Military Personnel Flight)
MTF	Military Treatment Facility (Base Clinic/Hospital)
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
<b>N</b>	
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer - Enlisted, an individual who is not commissioned, rank E-5:E-9
NCOA	Noncommissioned Officer Academy
NCOIC	Noncommissioned Officer in Charge
NLT	Not Later Than
<b>O</b>	
OCONUS	Outside the Continental United States - Overseas tour, INCLUDES Alaska and Hawaii
Officer	An individual who is commissioned, holding the rank of Second Lieutenant (O-1) through General (O-10).
OIC	Officer in Charge
OJT	On the Job Training
OPR	Officer Performance Report
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OPSEC	Operational Security
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo - The pace of an operation or operations; includes all of the activities the unit is conducting; can be a single activity or series of operations.
ORI	Operational Readiness Inspection
Orders	Spoken or written instructions to military/civilian members
OSI	Office of Special Investigations
OTS	Officer Training School
<b>P</b>	
PCM	Primary Care Manager (Assigned by Medical Group)
PCS	Permanent Change of Station - Reassignment to a different duty station
Per Diem	Compensation for the extra expenses incurred while on temporary duty away from one's home station.
PFMP	Personal Financial Management Program - Provides personal financial counseling to all military branches including retirees and widows of servicemembers and GS civilians. The goal of PFMP is the creation of a comprehensive financial management assistance service which will guide individuals and families through the life cycle of financial wellness.
PME	Professional Military Education
POA	Power of Attorney - Legal document permitting a person to act on behalf of another.
POC	Point of Contact
POV	Privately Owned Vehicle
PRF	Promotion Recommendation Form (for officers)
Protocol	Military customs and courtesies
<b>Q</b>	
Quarters	Government housing for married members
<b>R</b>	
Rank	Official title of member; relative position within a military grade such as sergeant or captain)
Remote	An overseas assignment, usually 12 to 18 months; in which families cannot accompany the active-duty member.

Retreat	Flag lowering ceremony at end of the day
Reveille	Flag raising ceremony at the beginning of the day
RIF	Reduction in Force
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
Ruffles & Flourishes	Musical honor for general officers and equivalent ranking officials

## **S**

SBP	Survivor's Benefit Plan
SF	Security Forces/Defenders
SGLI	Serviceman's Group Life Insurance
Sick Call	Specific block of time for medical attention
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SNCOA	Senior NCO Academy
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Sortie	A flight or single flying mission
SOS	Squadron Officer School
Space A	Space Available (Referring to available seats on aircraft/billeting)
Sponsor	A person assigned to assist an in-bound or newly arrived person to a base.
Squadron	An Air & Space Force unit which has a first sergeant and a commander. Squadrons are usually identified both numerically, and by function. For example: 18FSS (18th Force Support Squadron)
SSN/SSAN	Social Security Number
STEP	Stripes for Exceptional Performers (for enlisted)

## **T**

TAP	Transition Assistance Program - Established to meet the needs of separating servicemembers during their period of transition into civilian life by offering job-search assistance and related services.
TDY	Temporary Duty - Relocation of a military member from their base of assignment to a different duty location or station, such as attending Air Force Leadership School, or specific technical training, for a specific period of time.
Tech School	Technical School - Formal school training for a military job.
TLA	Temporary Living Allowance
TLE	Temporary Lodging Expenses
TLF	Temporary Living Facility
TMO	Traffic Management Office Organization responsible to handle the movement of a military member's belongings to a new duty location.
TRICARE	The health insurance program for military members and their families.
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan

## **U**

UCI	Unit Compliance Inspection
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice - Military's set of laws
Unit	Group of military members, both officer and enlisted personnel, assigned to work together with a common vision, mission, and goals.
USAF	United States Air Force
USSF	United States Space Force
USAFE	United States Air Force –Europe

## **V**

VA	Veteran's Administration
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## **W**

WAPS	Weighted Airman Promotion System (for enlisted)
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children's program; also available Overseas.

# CHECKLISTS



## DEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST



## PCS/MOVING CHECKLIST



## JUST MARRIED CHECK LIST



## NEW BABY CHECKLIST

Use these pages to create your own custom checklist and access the QR codes above for some of the most commonly used checklist resources.

[illegible]

[illegible]







You, the military spouse, are the backbone of our Air and Space Forces. You are essential to the success and strength of our military and this nation. I continue to be in awe of who you are and what you do.

As Gen Brown and I travel from base to base, we see your value and what you provide our Air Force every day. You have no doubt earned a seat at the table through your selfless service and sacrifice, but also because you have invaluable knowledge and insight into the quality-of-life (QoL) areas that impact our families.

My focus as your CSAF spouse is on these quality-of-life areas, specifically **Childcare**, **Education** (for spouses and children), **Healthcare** (specifically Access to Care to include mental health), **Housing**, and **Spouse Employment**. I am calling this effort "Five to Thrive." I have chosen these top five QoL areas based on personal experience, feedback from military families, as well as surveys conducted by various organizations. My goal with this initiative is to ensure these five specific areas are highlighted and any challenges under them are met with purpose and resolve, to include the unique challenges of our EFMP families.

In facilitating this effort, I would like to start sending you the most current information in these focus areas through my monthly Spouse SITREPs (Situation Report). I encourage you to share these SITREPs with the spouses in your organizations, to include Key Spouses and Key Spouse Mentors.

The layout of this Spouse SITREP will include information related to the FIVE QoL areas as well as any additional information that may be helpful to our families at the time. If you have any thoughts or questions regarding these SITREPs, please feel free to reach out to me at [CSAFSpouseSITREP@gmail.com](mailto:CSAFSpouseSITREP@gmail.com). I would also love to hear your inspirational stories, testimonials, and tips on being a military spouse so that I can share them in my SITREP with you all!

I am proud to serve alongside you and appreciate all you do to support our Air and Space Force families!

Best,

*Mrs. Sharene Brown*

**Sharene Brown**, *Spouse of the 22nd Chief of Staff of the Air Force*

You can Follow me on [Facebook](#).

# FIVE TO THRIVE

SPOUSE SITREP VOL. 1 OCT 2021



## CHILDCARE

There are two new Pilot Programs seeking to provide creative solutions to Childcare. These programs are currently available only in certain locations while being tested. If these programs are in your location, you may want learn more about them and take advantage of these opportunities. See articles linked below for more information on the programs and where they are currently being offered:

### **[New Pilot Program for Full-time, In-home Childcare Providers](#)**

Furthering its commitment to providing additional childcare options to meet the needs of service members and military families, the Department of Defense will initiate a new pilot program to grant fee assistance to military families for full-time, in-home childcare providers. <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2674140/new-pilot-program-explores-helping-military-parents-with-fee-assistance-for-in/>

### **[New Pilot Program for Kinderspot App to Streamline Childcare Availability](#)**

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) is testing a mobile app designed to centralize and streamline the subletting of short-term slots at military child development centers. The app, called Kinderspot, allows families on Air Force installations to sublet child care spots at their home station or find spots at a location they will visit temporarily. It is being tested at certain locations.

<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2674058/air-force-tests-child-care-subletting-app/>

## EDUCATION

### **Joint Service School Liaison Program Manager Listing**

It's back to school and Permanent Change of Station (PCS) season! Did you know there is an education office for PreK-12 at every installation? These education specialists provide more than transition assistance and are able to help you with local school navigation, deployment support, scholarship & grant resources and more. To find your local installation School Liaison Program Manager to see what resources are available or how you can help advocate for PreK-12 education in your local community please connect through the MI Joint Service School Liaison Program Manager Listing [here](#).

<https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/search?program-service=12/view-by=ALL>

### **Anchored4Life E-Learning Series**

In collaboration with the Department of the Air Force and US Navy School Liaison Programs, Anchored4Life has developed a video series that provides families and caregivers with fun and engaging activities to introduce, practice, and strengthen resilience life skill development with youth. These short videos are great for families or for group activities to support youth around the globe. The videos can be viewed unlimited times on the Anchored4Life website.

<https://anchored4life.com/e-learning-series/>

## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

### **[NEW Spouse Licensure Portability \(SLP\) Tool](#)**

<https://www.af.mil/About-Us/State-Licensure-Portability/>

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) just launched a NEW Spouse Licensure Portability (SLP) Tool to assist DAF, Guard & Reserve spouses identify occupational/professional licensing requirements upon PCSing/PCAing. Help spread the word on this awesome tool!! Spouses interested in providing feedback on the SLP Tool and/or participating in "live" Focus Group opportunities can sign-up through sending a message [here](#). <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/State-Licensure-Portability/>

# HEALTHCARE

## **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Automated Family Member Travel Screening**

Beginning 30 Aug 2021, service members with a pending PCS assignment in need of Family Member Travel Screenings will be able to access and update their information via myVector. Members will receive an email and myVector notification and must complete the mandatory questionnaire to be entered into the new case management system. New automated capabilities include: elimination (in most cases) of doctor's appointments, CAC-free system access, allowing family members to complete most of the paperwork, and the ability to save personal information for future PCS. For more information, please reach out to the [DAF EFMP office](mailto:afpc.dp3x.workflow@us.af) at afpc.dp3x.workflow@us.af.

# HOUSING

## **CONUS PCS Housing Impact Mitigation**

<https://www.peterson.spaceforce.mil/Portals/15/Tab%201%20-%20Temporary%20Authority%20-%20Lodging.pdf>

The memo here authorizes AFSVC/CC to discount lodging rates in support of Airmen and Guardians having difficulty securing housing after PCS to CONUS (stateside) locations. The discounted rates only apply to on-base lodging for members who have reached the end of the 10-day Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) authorization, and in areas where 60 days TLE have not been approved. This authorization expires 31 Jan 2022 and applies to areas experiencing limited availability of rental properties and significant increases in rental costs where Airmen/Guardians are delayed with securing housing. The AFSVC/CC will determine locations eligible for this lodging rate discount.

## **Temporary Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Increase**

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2788871/dod-authorizes-a-temporary-increase-to-2021-basic-allowance-for-housing-rates-f/source/GovDelivery/>

OSD has provided temporary BAH increases, effective 1 Oct 2021, for 56 Military Housing Areas (MHAs). This is in response to rising housing rates and shortages typically related to COVID impacts. Note that these are temporary and are NOT rate protected and as such could adjust again when the normal annual BAH rate adjustments are released in January. Also note that members must certify the need for the higher rate (not automatically granted).

# SPOUSE STORIES

## **We're All in This Together**

Taylor Scott, Air Force Spouse

My husband was a new recruiter outside of base and I gave birth within our first few months there. I didn't know the other spouses well but the flight chief's wife showed up in every way. Our personalities didn't match well and we didn't have anything to talk about, but when I had PPD (Postpartum Depression), she made sure she was there anyways. She held my daughter and we sat quietly for hours. She didn't ask how to help, she jumped in and helped like family would. We've returned the favor and grown and added to our spouse family. We're all in on this together, that's the Air Force I know.

*Note: If you are experiencing Postpartum Depression, there are several FREE resources for counseling available to you, to include Military OneSource and Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC). Reach out to your Key Spouse or Airmen & Family Readiness Center for more information. You can also check out this article from [Military OneSource on Seven Counseling Options for Service Members and their Families](#).*

## DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE (DAF) COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD (CAB)

The CAB and Community Action Team (CAT) are senior leader driven forums to identify and resolve quality of life issues impacting Total Force readiness. Families contribute to the success of our Total Force readiness. CAT meetings usually occur monthly and CAB meetings occur quarterly at the MAJCOM and installations. Mrs. Mollie Raymond, Chief Space Operations (CSO) spouse, and I have been invited to participate in future DAF CABs. This invitation led me to think about ways our leadership spouses can engage in their quarterly CAB meetings and monthly CAT meetings at the MAJCOM and local installations since you are a welcomed participant. The CAB/CAT provides our spouses a seat at the table to discuss QoL issues impacting military families. If command and leadership spouses cannot attend, I encourage them, when possible, to identify another leadership spouse who can attend in their place. Your knowledge and experience provides a valuable and unique perspective to help shape the outcome for family programs. Military spouses have so much to offer our military, and the CAB/CAT is one avenue for them to do so.

## DOD SURVEY FOR SPOUSES OF ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

DoD is now offering all spouses of active-duty members the opportunity to provide feedback on the most pressing military life issues. The Active-Duty Spouse Survey is conducted every two years and analyzes key issues affecting military spouses, including spouse support, employment and stress. It is important for the DoD to hear from our spouses on those QoL challenges you all face. To complete the 2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey, click [here](https://dodsurveys.mil/). <https://dodsurveys.mil/>

## 2021 CONGRESSIONAL MILITARY FAMILY CAUCUS SUMMIT

The 2021 Congressional Military Family Caucus Summit is scheduled for 14 Oct 2021 from 0900 - 1700 EST. It is a virtual event and this year co-chair's Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Congressman Sanford Bishop have chosen the topic: "Taking the Pulse of Military Families during COVID-19". They will be discussing the challenges military family communities are facing as we emerge from the pandemic in terms of Modern Military Communities, Education, Child Care, Spouse Employment, Healthcare/EFMP, Mental Health, Financial Readiness, Food Insecurity, and Housing. Sign up to register for the webinar, and attend any portion of it, [here](https://bishop.house.gov/CMFC-Summit-2021?fbclid=IwAR2O1aPbJ0I-TJU0oZ5fYF42w05KesbO-IcvAg-MW65A4twph1envu3J0I4U). <https://bishop.house.gov/CMFC-Summit-2021?fbclid=IwAR2O1aPbJ0I-TJU0oZ5fYF42w05KesbO-IcvAg-MW65A4twph1envu3J0I4U>

## SPOUSE DEVELOPMENT: MASTER RESILIENCE TRAINER COURSE (MRTC)

There are multiple virtual opportunities over the next year for Key Spouses to become Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs). Key Spouses will need to have completed the Resilience Training Assistant (RTA) course before they can attend MRTC. Contact your local Community Support Coordinator (CSC) for additional information regarding how to become an MRT.

## AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION (AFA) TOWN HALL: LEADERSHIP AND THE FAMILY

<https://vimeo.com/611914816>

If you missed the AFA Town Hall on 22 September, you can watch the video [here](https://vimeo.com/611914816). Air and Space Force Leadership talked about Quality of Life (QoL) challenges that impact our military families, to include our EFMP families. I launched the new initiative, Five to Thrive, at this event. Check out these two articles for a recap of the Town Hall event from [AirForceMag.com](https://www.airforcemag.com) and [SpaceForce.mil/news](https://www.spaceforce.mil/news).

<https://www.airforcemag.com/air-force-chief-of-staff-browns-son-autism-exceptional-families/>  
<https://www.spaceforce.mil/News/Article/2788970/department-of-the-air-force-leaders-talk-leadership-family-during-panel-at-afa/>

# KEY DATES

14 October

2021 Congressional Military Family Caucus Summit



Thanksgiving holiday is fast approaching, and I know many of us will be reflecting on the things we are most thankful. Family and health, of course, are on the list, but I also have found like many of you, that community is just as important. It seems the more challenges we face, the less we recognize how much we have, not realizing how important these things are until they are gone. Over the past year or two, I have become aware that my community IS my family. It provides me the support, inspiration, sense of purpose, and fellowship that I need. As November prompts a season of fellowship and Thanksgiving, it is also **Month of the Military Family**, so I want to say thank you to all our military families for your service and for being my community and my family! I am very thankful for you, your support, the support you give each other, and more importantly the support that you give our great airmen and their families. Being able to serve alongside you in your various roles in our Air Force is an honor. The roles you fill every day add such great value to the overall quality and culture of Air Force life.

Unfortunately, though this time of year we often find ourselves near or at capacity in these various roles. With that in mind, I would like to remind each one of you to take care of yourself too! I would also like to take this opportunity of Thanksgiving to highlight some of the many leadership roles that many of you assume in our Air Force and the differences in their duties and descriptions. Each role you fill deserves its own measure of respect and appreciation, especially this time of year, and as the holidays are just around the corner, I have no doubt that some of you will be either filling one of these leadership roles or potentially interacting with someone who is. **Key Spouses** are commander-appointed volunteers that serve as a vital resource to command teams in an effort to take care of our airmen and their families. **Key Spouse Mentors** are volunteers that support our Key Spouses. They share their expertise, provide encouragement and advocate for the program. **Command Spouses** are married to someone in a leadership role (commander) within a unit, squadron, group, wing etc. There are no "official duties" or "defined roles" for a spouse of a commander; however, supporting your military member in their role as a commander to enhance unit family morale can be incredibly rewarding. **Lead Spouses** are volunteer advisors that advocate or serve as an ambassador for the unit's military members, civilians, and their families. A lead spouse is often an experienced military spouse who supports the unit when there is no current command spouse, or the command spouse is unable to volunteer in that role. These are just a few of the many roles' spouses fill and as you can see in the descriptions, they are all volunteer positions and vital to our quality of life.

No matter what role you are in, there are so many ways you are making an impact on our Air Force through your support and encouragement to our families, to include the **Five to Thrive** focus areas which includes **Childcare, Education, Healthcare, Housing and Spouse Employment**. You not only work and/or volunteer in these focus areas, but you are constantly creating, collaborating, and advocating in ways to improve your lives and the lives around you every day. Gen Brown and I want to say how thankful we are for your service and your willingness to serve in these various roles. You are the reason our military families are thriving and will continue to thrive during this wonderful season of Thanksgiving!

Best,

**Sharene Brown**, Spouse of the 22nd Chief of Staff of the Air Force

You can Follow me at [www.facebook.com/CSAF22Spouse](https://www.facebook.com/CSAF22Spouse)

# FIVE TO THRIVE



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## CHILDCARE

**MilitaryChildCare.com** (MCC) is a Department of Defense (DoD) website for military and DoD-affiliated families seeking childcare. This single online gateway provides access to comprehensive information on military-operated and military subsidized childcare options worldwide. With MCC, families can search for and request care, manage their requests, and update their household profile - online any time and from anywhere - making it easier for families to find the childcare they need. Visit <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mccu/ui/#/> for more information.

The **Department of the Air Force Child Care Fee Assistance Program** was created to provide authorized Active Duty personnel assistance in locating, selecting, and offsetting the cost of civilian child care, when installation child care is not available, or a viable option for the Department of the Air Force Sponsor and their family. The programs available through Child Care Aware® of America provide subsidies for eligible Department of the Air Force dependents enrolled in quality commercial child care programs throughout the United States. Child Care Aware® of America authorizes subsidy amounts based on total family income for those eligible Department of the Air Force families and supplies monthly payments directly to the prospective child care provider. For more information, please visit <https://www.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/air-force/fee-assistance/>.

*Note:* DOD tracks Demand Accommodation Rate as a metric for whether it is meeting the childcare needs of military families through the Child Development Center (CDC) waiting list. These waiting lists can impact potential funding and resourcing depending on need; therefore, it is important for you to add your child's name to the CDC waitlist at your location.

## EDUCATION

Did you know? **The Federal Impact Aid Program**, Title VII of the Every Student Succeeds Act, is the nation's oldest K-12 Federal education program. The Federal government is exempt from paying taxes on its property and Congress created the Impact Aid Program to reimburse school districts for lost local tax revenue. It is an important source of funding for local schools that educate military children. Impact Aid funds do not cover the full cost of educating military students. Impact Aid funds help to ensure military children are provided a quality education. School district leaders decide how Impact Aid funds are spent, including instructional materials, staff, transportation, technology, facility needs, etc. supporting all students, wherever the needs are greatest.

While not directly associated with the Impact Aid form, the filling out of the form has many secondary benefits. School Liaisons and Command teams are able to identify where students attend school, which helps them provide additional resources and opportunities for grants, programs, and support. Additionally, the military can strengthen its recruitment and retention by focusing its efforts to support and partner with local military impacted school districts. To learn more about Federal Impact Aid please visit [www.nafisdc.org](http://www.nafisdc.org).

### **DoDEA Expanded Eligibility Pilot Program (E2P2) for the DoDEA Virtual High School**

This Pilot Program provides the initial plan for expanding eligibility for dependents of members of the armed forces on active duty to register into the DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS). Participants in the pilot program are in grades 9 – 12 for school year 2021-22, with priority given to school districts serving select rural installations in stateside locations. This program is also available to military children who are homeschooled. Registration is currently open for spring enrollment. For more information visit <https://www.dodea.edu/dvs/e2p2.cfm>.



# HEALTHCARE

**TRICARE Open Season** is the annual period when you can enroll in or change your health care coverage for the next year. In 2021, TRICARE Open Season begins Nov. 8 and ends Dec. 13. Any enrollment changes you make will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022. Open season applies to anyone enrolled in or eligible for a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select. Visit <https://tricare.mil/Plans/Enroll/OpenSeason> for more information.

*If you're eligible to participate in TRICARE Open Season, you have three options:*

**Stay in your plan.** If you want to stay in your current TRICARE health plan, you do not have to re-enroll. You'll continue in your current health plan through 2022 or as long as you are eligible.

**Enroll in a plan.** If you are eligible for a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select but not enrolled, you can enroll in a plan now.

**Change plans.** If you're already enrolled in a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select, you can switch plans and switch between individual and family enrollment.

# HOUSING

**Housing Early Assistance Tool (HEAT)** creates an easy on-line experience to connect you, the Service Member, with your future destination and offers on-line venue to obtain housing assistance prior to a PCS transfer. HQ Air Force Housing has successfully implemented HEAT across the AF Enterprise so members can reach out to installations when preparing for transition. Installations are accessible through the HEAT tool across CONUS and most OCONUS installations. Members should use HEAT when preparing to transfer to their new assignment. Learn more at the [HOMES.mil](https://www.housing.af.mil/HOMES.mil) site at <https://www.housing.af.mil/>

**Temporary Basic Allowance for Housing Increases.** The COVID-19 pandemic has led to low availability and turnover of rental housing stock, which, in turn, has led to rental cost increases in many locations. As a result, the Department of Defense has temporarily authorized increases in the 2021 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for 56 Military Housing Areas (MHAs) across the U.S. Visit [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/BAH\\_Temporary\\_Increase\\_Rates\\_Changes\\_Only.pdf](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/BAH_Temporary_Increase_Rates_Changes_Only.pdf) to view a list of the 56 MHAs.

To receive the temporary increase in BAH, members must certify their housing costs have increased due to COVID-19 impacts. These temporary increases are effective October 1, 2021 and expire December 31, 2021. Additionally, rate protection does not apply for the temporary rates, and some members may see their rates decrease from the temporary rate when the new BAH rates take effect January 1, 2022.

## **Privatized Housing Resident Advocates**

In the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Act, Congress created the Military Housing Bill of Rights. Out of this act a Resident Advocate position was created, serving as a connection between residents, leadership, and various housing agencies. According to [AFI32-6000](#), "the installation Privatized Housing Resident Advocate takes a proactive approach to ensure military members' and their families' concerns with privatized housing are addressed and elevated to the appropriate levels within the chain of command." The Housing Resident Advocate acts as the liaison between privatized housing residents, military housing authorities (including the installation Commander), and the Privatized Housing project owner, for issues pertaining to privatized housing and resident's rights and advocacy.

For more information on our Privatized Housing Resident Advocates please reach out to your local Military Housing Office. To see the AFI publication visit [https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a4/publication/afi32-6000/afi32-6000.pdf](https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a4/publication/afi32-6000/afi32-6000.pdf)

# SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

## Game Changing OPM Rule Change

The Office of Personnel Management has temporarily removed several geographic restrictions associated with special hiring authorities for military spouses through August 13, 2023.

The new guidance allows for any military spouse, regardless of location or relocation status to apply under the hiring authority for a federal job. Military spouses can also use this authority to be hired multiple times until the August 2023 deadline, rather than the one per relocation rule currently in place. Spouses of 100 percent disabled veterans and non-remarried widows or widowers of service members killed while on duty may still only use the authority once. After August 13, 2023, military spouses may apply for federal jobs under the authority that are not in the vicinity of their relocation if there are no agencies with available positions in their geographic area.

For more information visit <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/10/21/opm-rule-change-military-spouses-predicted-be-game-changer.html>

# SPOUSE STORIES

## **Showing Up**

Jenn Blazier, Air Force Spouse

Being an EFMP family for the past 20 years has presented a mix of challenges for my family on a variety of levels. Without the support of my fellow military spouses, I would have never channeled through it all. What made the hard times in my journey easier was the incredibly supportive friends that always had my back. Military spouses go through a lot of adjustments, and it doesn't necessarily get easier the more you do it.

The value in "showing up" isn't always immediately tangible to you, but it is measurable to someone in that moment. I know this to be true because I have been that someone on numerous occasions. My heart is full and my appreciation is HUGE when I say Thank you to EVERY spouse that decides to be there for someone else...*it matters.*

*Note: For the latest EFMP updates, check out the DAF EFMP Facebook page here:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/AirForceEFMP>



## DOD ACTIVE-DUTY SPOUSE SURVEY

DoD is now offering all active-duty spouses the opportunity to provide feedback on the most pressing military life issues. The Active-Duty Spouse Survey is conducted every two years and analyzes key issues affecting military spouses, including spouse support, employment and stress. It is important for the DoD to hear from our spouses on those QoL challenges you all face. To complete the 2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey, visit <https://dodsurveys.mil/>.

## RELATIONSHIP WELLNESS SUMMIT

The DOD will host an inaugural Relationship Wellness Summit Nov. 16-17, 2021. Designed to encourage military community members to strengthen existing relationships and build skills for new ones, this multiday virtual event will feature testimonials from military couples and experts on romantic and parent/child relationships.

The summit will provide participants with resources for strengthening the relationships they have with themselves, while fortifying connections and building interpersonal skills for the relationships they have with others. Participants will also be able to share their own experiences and stories. The event is open to all members of the military community — whether single, dating, married or parenting.

Participants can sign up by visiting [www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event\\_id=14730](http://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?preview&event_id=14730).

For more information on the Relationship Wellness Summit visit <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2829239/registration-open-for-novembers-inaugural-relationship-wellness-summit/>.

## KEY DATES

<b>November</b>	Month of the Military Family
<b>11 November</b>	Veterans Day
<b>16-17 November</b>	Relationship Wellness Summit
<b>25 November</b>	Thanksgiving



*Kindness begins with the understanding that we all struggle*  
–Charles Glassman

The holiday season is a special time of year that sparks feelings of excitement and nostalgia for many of us. It is a truly magical time of year when we gather with our loved ones, from near and far, celebrating old family traditions and honoring memories of the past. We usher in our friends and neighbors, creating new traditions and making more memories along the way. The holidays bring out the best in us indeed, but it is essential to remember that the holidays can also trigger stress and sadness for many as well. A variety of things can contribute to these emotions, such as financial stress, loneliness, illness, loss of a loved one, depression, and the list goes on. As you know, our military families have even more stressors such as deployments, PCS, high-ops tempo, cultural and geographical restraints, PTSD, etc. When we combine these stressors with the pandemic challenges we may still be facing (travel restrictions, unemployment, physical/mental health, telework, etc.) as well as the pressures we put on ourselves during the holidays, we quickly understand how someone feel less spirited or have little to celebrate this season.

I think we can all relate to at least one of these stressors, especially the ones we put on ourselves. I, too, have often felt the pressure of meeting my expectations and/or the expectations of others during the holidays. Whether I was trying to make a “new to me” house look holiday perfect, make sure I honored every family tradition, or attended every holiday engagement with my husband while maintaining a perfect sense of holiday cheer; it was all added pressure that I put on myself. Getting caught up in the holiday hubbub and losing perspective is quite easy to do.

Luckily, I am constantly reminded by you, my fellow military spouses, of what the holiday season means and why it’s important to me. I see you giving to our military families and our Airmen, often with nothing in return. I see you seeking out those in need and offering your support. I see you making the best of the holidays with constantly changing scenery and challenging circumstances. I see you giving back every to our Air Force every day, and more so during the holidays. You inspire me and those around you to give back as well, and I am proud to be among such selfless leaders, especially when I see how the smallest act of kindness can bring someone so much joy.

Charles Dickens wrote “No one is useless who lightens the burdens of others” and I hope this holiday season we can all find someone in our community and lighten their burden... someone who is less fortunate, someone who has lost a loved one, or someone who has lost their spirit. Sadly, we don’t have to look far these days. So, let’s all take a spiritual reprieve from the holiday madness and pressures of the season and find someone less willing to celebrate the season ... then let’s become their reason!

Thank you all for what you do every day to inspire me and for all that you are doing for our military families this holiday season! Gen Brown and I are so grateful for your selfless leadership and your servant’s heart!

Warmest wishes for a happy holiday season,

*Mrs. Sharene Brown*

**Sharene Brown**, Spouse of the 22nd Chief of Staff of the Air Force

You can Follow me at [www.facebook.com/CSAF22Spouse](https://www.facebook.com/CSAF22Spouse)

# FIVE & THRIVE



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## CHILDCARE

### **Expanded Childcare Program (ECC)**

The Department of the Air Force Family Child Care (DAF FCC), Expanded Child Care (ECC) Program assists families in obtaining high-quality childcare from certified providers at or near the installation. Childcare is available for children ages two weeks to 12 years. ECC is available at all DAF led Active-Duty locations with an active FCC Program or at other non-DAF led installations/locations where approved providers are available. Use of ECC is permitted once all paperwork is completed and approved. Parents using ECC are expected to arrange their work schedules to have ample time to be with their children. Care is dependent on the availability of funding and providers.

<https://www.dafchildandyouth.com/expanded-child-care>

### **Pilot Program**

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) Child and Youth Programs (CYP) is piloting a program that allows military families to consider off base childcare that uses state quality-rated programs when military families are unable to secure enough nationally accredited care. DAF CYP is piloting this initiative in Virginia, Maryland, and Nevada. In FY22, this pilot program will be expanded to Florida, Washington State, and California.

## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

### **10 Great Resources for Military Spouse Jobs**

Check out 10 resources for military spouse jobs at: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/spouse/spouse-education-and-employment/10-great-resources-for-military-spouse-jobs/>

### **New Military Spouse Employment Partnerships (MSEP) Employers**

The Department of Defense inducted 45 new companies and organizations into the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. Learn about these new partners and their commitment to recruit, hire, promote, and retain military spouses. [https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/military-spouse-employment-partnership-employers?utm\\_campaign=moe-ews-nov2021&utm\\_content=html&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/military-spouse-employment-partnership-employers?utm_campaign=moe-ews-nov2021&utm_content=html&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

# HEALTHCARE

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**Change plans.** If you're already enrolled in a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select, you can switch plans and switch between individual and family enrollment.

# EDUCATION

## **School Liaison Program MilLife Guide**

The Military One Source App now contains a MilLife Guide for the School Liaison Program. It allows families, leadership and community stakeholders to connect fast to support and answers. With 24/7 access to powerful tools and help in your hands, anytime, anywhere. Provides a quick read on PreK-12 Education support along with articles, benefits, tools and connecting with a local PreK-12 education specialist. See link for more information on the Military OneSource App: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/my-military-onesource-app/>

## **DoDEA FY21 Grant Awardees**

DoDEA received 75 quality and innovative proposals from school districts across the Nation for the FY 21 Military-Connected Local Educational Agencies for Academic and Support Program (MCASP). Thirty-two grants totaling \$46.9M were awarded to military-connected public-school districts. Sixteen school districts affecting DAF-connected students were awarded \$22M to support STEM, Health, World Language and Technical/Career Programs. DAF Installations supported by schools receiving the grants were Offutt, Scott, Eglin, Hurlburt Field, Peterson, Schriever, USAFA, Buckley, Grand Forks, Whiteman, Beale, and Sheppard. Contact Ms. Lori Phipps at 210-774-8673 or your installation School Liaison Program Manager by scanning the QR Code for additional information.

## **EFMP Special Education Specialist**

The Exceptional Family Member Program continues expanding its team of resources at the EFMP Central Cell and now includes a special education specialist as part of continuing efforts to support families. Marcine Woodley recently joined the EFMP Central Cell as a special education specialist. In this role, Woodley will assist families navigating the education system. For more information on this new position, please see article here: [https://www.afpc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2831666/efmp-adds-special-education-specialist-to-central-cell/fbclid/IwAR3lwuekQYz3CFn9IBDLQ20r\\_6svwok-TH0icuAWCLGEaqK395xa51c8T16w/](https://www.afpc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2831666/efmp-adds-special-education-specialist-to-central-cell/fbclid/IwAR3lwuekQYz3CFn9IBDLQ20r_6svwok-TH0icuAWCLGEaqK395xa51c8T16w/)

## **Power of Partnership in Education**

Check out this article that illustrates how we are stronger together, working with our local community partners to make education better for not just our military community but also the civilian community. Consider ways to create these same types of partnerships when trying to tackle Five&Thrive initiatives, as all of these are tied to both family and mission readiness. <https://www.holloman.af.mil/News/Display/Article/2835740/power-of-partnerships-holloman-goodfellow-schools-see-results-set-standard/fbclid/IwAR2jipNjTAGnO9tyw4XxwU8jbArMUv6J3LoAcaLo7KAvWrhjajrXQOP50/>

# HOUSING

## **Moving Benefits**

Although May through September is considered prime PCS season, there are military families that PCS during the winter months. Here is a breakdown of your PCS benefits: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-housing/moving/moving-benefits/>

*Note:* As a reminder, Airmen and Guardians can currently qualify for discounted lodging rates if having difficulty securing housing after PCS to CONUS locations. The discounted rates only apply to on-base lodging for members who have reached the end of the 10-day TLE authorization, and in areas where 60 days TLE have not been approved. This authorization expires 31 Jan 22 and applies to areas experiencing limited availability of rental properties and significant increases in rental costs where Airmen/Guardians are delayed with securing housing. The AFSVC/CC will determine locations eligible for this lodging rate discount. For more information, reach out to your local housing office to see if your location is eligible to the lodging rate discount. The eligible list, current as of 1 December, includes:

Arnold AFB, Tennessee	Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota	Lackland AFB, Texas	Peterson SFB, Colorado
Beale AFB, California	Fairchild AFB, Washington	Luke AFB, Arizona	Randolph AFB, Texas
Buckley SFB, Colorado	Goodfellow AFB, Texas	MacDill AFB, Florida	Shaw AFB, South Carolina
Dover AFB, Delaware	Hill AFB, Utah	Maxwell, Alabama	Sheppard AFB, Texas
Eielson AFB, Alaska	Hurlburt Field, Florida	McConnell AFB, Kansas	Travis AFB, California
Edwards AFB, California	Keesler AFB, Mississippi	Mountain Home AFB, Idaho	USAFA, Colorado
Eglin AFB, Florida	Kirtland AFB, New Mexico	Nellis AFB, Nevada	

## **DAF Military Housing**

Did you know there is a hotline you can call to report a military housing issue that is not being resolved at the local level? Here is a toll free hotline to contact the AF housing section and AFCEC will investigate the issue: 800-482-6431. The Tenant Bill of Rights ensures access to unit maintenance history, and establishes a process to withhold rent payment while in formal dispute resolution. If the 18 tenant rights process is not working at the local level, there is a process to help you address the issues. See article for further information: <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2684039/air-force-makes-more-rights-available-for-housing-tenants/>

# SPOUSE STORIES

## **Together We are Stronger**

Heba Abdelaal, Air Force Spouse

This video (<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/819086/oar-oaw-documentary>) beautifully highlights the mission critical work on the front lines of Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome (OAR/OAW). Most of my volunteer time was spent at the Nightingale Theater which, after outgrowing three previous locations, became the primary donation intake site for OAR/OAW. Day in and day out, you'd see the same volunteers come in to help sort donations sometimes for 10, 12 and 14 hours a day – the more items we were able to sort through, the more that could be distributed to evacuees.

Behind the scenes, military spouses and community volunteers also gave in equally meaningful ways. There were the groups who voluntarily made homemade meals and cookies to feed those volunteering and working 12-hour and overnight shifts on base (thank you!), teachers who helped bridge language barriers through games and music, the group of spouses who started a bottle sanitation initiative, the families who picked up and returned donated items that needed to be washed, and several individuals across Europe that volunteered their skills sewing over 20,000 headscarves and modest dress items required for prayer in the Muslim faith.

To all the military spouses and volunteers who kept showing up on the front lines and behind the scenes – thank you. Thank you for giving of yourselves for those in greater need. Your selfless acts of service make me proud to be a military spouse.

## KEY SPOUSE PROGRAM MEMO AND SURVEY

The CSAF, CSO, CMSAF, CMSSF and their spouses recently signed a memo to Squadron Command Teams, reinforcing the importance of the Key Spouse Program and soliciting feedback from command teams to help shape the program's future. Please encourage unit leadership to share their Key Spouse success stories, raise concerns, provide inputs and volunteer to be part of a focus group by taking the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y5XMYKJ>.

## ARMED FORCES INSURANCE MILITARY SPOUSE OF THE YEAR

Nominations are open as of November 29 – January 21, 2022. The Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year (MSOY) Program exists to recognize military spouses for their outstanding contributions to the military community and the world. For more information on how to nominate a spouse, please go to <https://msoy.afis.org/the-program>

## SPOUSE OF ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER'S SURVEY

DoD is now offering all spouse of active-duty members the opportunity to provide feedback on the most pressing military life issues. The Spouse of Active-Duty Members Survey is conducted every two years and analyzes key issues affecting military spouses, including spouse support, employment and stress. It is important for the DoD to hear from our spouses on those QoL challenges you all face. To complete the 2021 Spouse of Active-Duty Member's Survey, visit <https://dodsurveys.mil/>

If you are looking for **counseling support** this time of year, there are several FREE resources available to you, to include Military OneSource and Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC). Reach out to your Key Spouse or Airmen & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) for more information. You can also check out this article from Military OneSource on options available to you and/or your family: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling/7-counseling-options-for-service-members-and-their-families/>

If you are in need of **financial support** this time of year, or if you are looking for ways to give back, here are a few organizations that support military families during the holidays. Please note this is not an exhaustive list: Pay Away the Layaway, Full Circle Home, Operation Christmas Spirit, Operation Holiday Joy (Armed Services YMCA), Operation Homefront, Red Cross, Spirit of Sharing, Soldier's Angels, Toys for Tots, Trees for Troops, USO, Wreaths Across America, and/or local military installation support through A&FRC.

*Note:* References to other organizations or the appearance of hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement of non-federal entities or imply Department of Defense or Department of the Air Force endorsement of any company or organization.

## KEY DATES

29 Nov - 6 Dec	Chanukah
1 December	Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday
7 December	Pearl Harbor Day
13 December	National Guard Birthday
18 December	National Wreaths Accross America
25 December	Christmas
26 Dec - 1 Jan	Kwanzaa
31 December	New Year's Eve